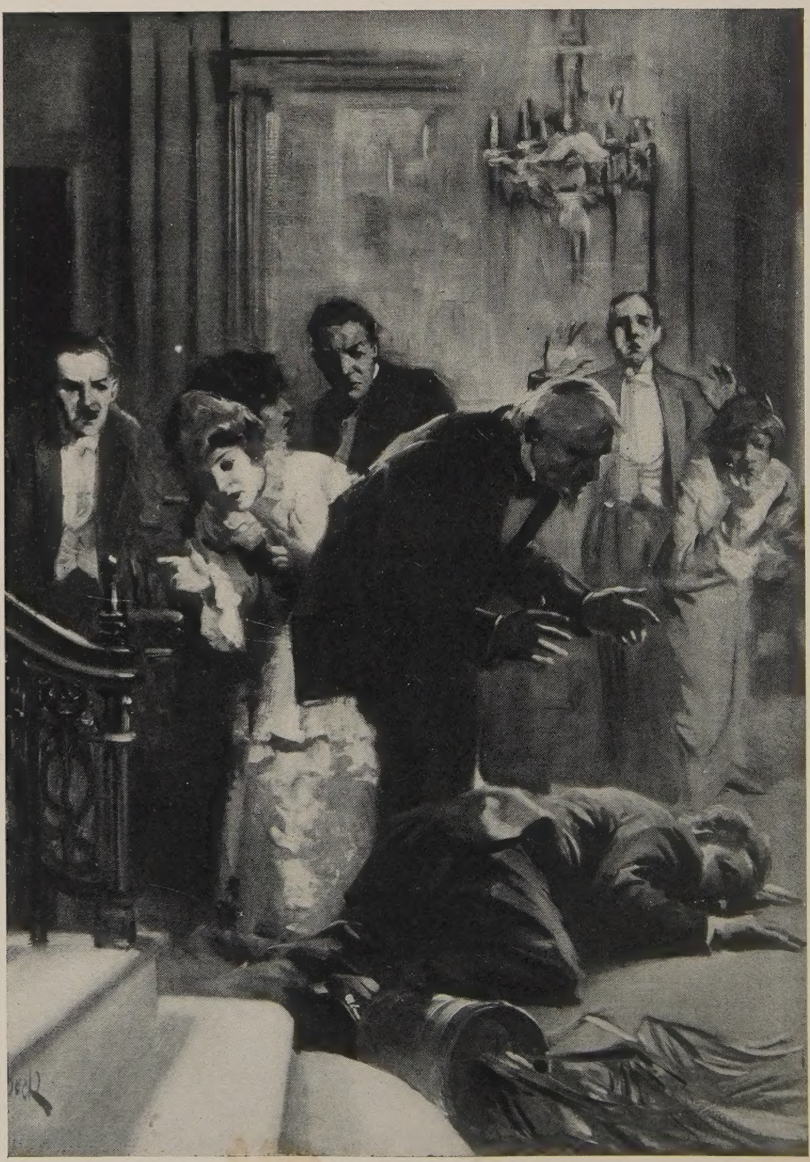
THE BOOMERS

ROY NORTON

H. D. Cofer



Burmah reeled as if the world was slipping from him and fell crumpled at their feet.

THE BOOMERS

BY

ROY NORTON

Author The Garden of Fate, The Plunderer, etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

W. GOLDBECK

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To

WILLIAM A. BAKER, Esq.,

WHOSE WANDERING FEET TREAD MUCH
OF THE EARTH AND WHO
IS AN APOSTLE OF
FRIENDSHIP.

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THE BOOMERS.

CHAPTER I.

A HEARTLESS KNAVE AND A GENTLE DREAMER MEET.

Colonel Alonzo Fairfax Hatch, somewhat disconsolately pacing the sunlit deck of *The Golden Eagle*, was filled with conflicting emotions. First, he was a sociable old gentleman, and the passengers neither knew him nor talked to him, nor cared who he was; second, he had lost his hand-bag, having quite carelessly walked off and left it on the pier at Seattle; third, somebody "without heart or honor, Sir," had picked his pockets. None of these three disturbing elements could have entered into his life in Chattanooga, Tennessee, whence he came.

"Pshaw! The worst of it is," he communed, "that Arabella's pot of strawberry jam is in that satchel! That, and two shirts, and four collars; but, anyhow, I saved mighty near forty cents laundry on them. It's a heap better than losing clean stuff."

Which philosophical afterthought appeared to ease the Colonel's mind and convince him that, after all, fortune favored him. His hand came down from the heavy white goatee, which in moments of abstraction it was his habit to stroke, and sought the pockets of the old style "Prince Albert" coat, to which he clung through tradition. The coat was buttoned, it was immaculately clean, and it hung straight over the carefully creased trousers. The carnation in the

lapel shone as fresh as when the Colonel had purchased it from a flower-vendor at the dock, gracefully lifted his hat to her, paid her a compliment on its fulness, and lovingly pinned it in place.

"Three things, Miss, I have always loved," he had told the astonished daughter of Italy; "women, flowers, and horses. I wish you a very good morning."

But now, with the flower still fresh, his hand slipped tentatively, abstractedly, as if impelled by its own volition, to the tails of his coat, and thence inward, to appear a moment later with a bag that had bulged the symmetry of his apparel. The hand seemed to swing around, still by its own volition, and hold itself up for the Colonel's attention. Almost as if surprised at meeting an old friend, the Colonel looked at the bag.

"Oh, yes, those goobers!" the Colonel exclaimed, delightedly, and then sauntered to the protection of *The Golden Eagle's* smoke-stack, and began to eat peanuts with the air and relish of a connoisseur. "Some's cocks, and some's culls," he meditated, fingering the tubers. "Can't get good tubers north of Mason and Dixon line. A gentleman wouldn't endeavor to make a success of a commercial pursuit by mixin' his peanuts. No, Sir!"

With which censure of gentlemen in the peanut business, the Colonel finished the last golden-brown nut, walked carefully to the rail, and threw the crumpled paper bag containing the shells overboard. The wind carried it outward; then inward, as the steamer hurried along the beautiful waters of Puget Sound, and it came to rest on deck again, as if loath to be drowned.

"Pshaw!" said the Colonel, and, hastily going aft, he chased the recalcitrant bag around, his coat-tails flapping each time he dived for it, until he had seized, and again consigned it to the rail on the windward side. The grinning deck-hand thereupon decided that this odd passenger was a man of cleanly and methodical habits, and rescued the Colonel's big-brimmed black felt hat, which had become loosened in his latest effort, and threatened a longing to keep company with the gaily floating bag.

The Colonel thanked the deck-hand with all the courtesy at his command, and would have presented him with a bill had there been one in his possession. He apologised for this seeming stinginess, until the deck-hand told him that everything was all right, and wished him luck; but, being a deck-hand, he afterward referred to the Colonel as a "queer old gook," which could be taken in a complimentary sense, or otherwise.

A party of girl excursionists halted near the Colonel, and indulged in rapturous youthful adjectives to express their appreciation of the green shores, the distant mountains, and the quiet coves that seemed slipping backward past *The Golden Eagle*. The lone old adventurer hovered as close to the girls as he dared, and was made homesick for his daughter, Arabella, the sole other living member of his own family, away back there in Tennessee. He wet his lips to speak, and timidly thought of sentences by which he might interject himself into the youthful company. His eagerness to talk to this heedless group of maids was pathetic, for he suffered the tortures of a hungry, lonesome heart. Down in

Chattanooga he dared talk to all of them, and there were whole dozens of girls like these, who exuberantly would have expressed their love and confidence in him by kissing his white old cheek, or patting it with soft, tender hands. It seemed years instead of but a few days since he had seen or heard any of them. It seemed ages since he had begun the quest, since he had bravely started out, a fine young man of sixty-five, to conquer fortune and the world.

And that was what he was now doing, away up there on Puget Sound, in the new and fabulous far North-west.

On the day when his lawyer sorrowfully told him that the failure of a bank of which he had been director, was breaking and impoverishing some few hundred stock-holders, the Colonel had frowned from his bewildered, kindly old eyes, and drawn down his heavy gray eyebrows, and stroked his white mustache and goatee, then said:

"Judge, you know, Sir, that there is but one thing for a man of honor to do. That one thing is to give what he has until every dollar is paid. I had a right smart time, as you may remember, cleaning up things when we all came back from the war. All of us did. Most of us made good, Sir. The Marquard plantation is to be put on the market, to-morrow!"

He slapped an emphatic fist on the table, and the lawyer, and old comrade in arms, sought to dissuade him.

"Why, Colonel Hatch," he said, "it'll bust you wide open just like a ripe melon that's been dropped off'n a wagon! And the Marquard has been owned by none but a Hatch, Sir, for nigh on to a hundred and twenty years. And——"

"See here, Yancey," the Colonel interrupted. "The Hatches always paid when they could. I can pay back every dollar lost by that poor unfortunate——"

"Scoundrel—Williams!"

"No, poor, unfortunate Williams," the Colonel went on, with his soft, patient drawl, "and Yancey, if it wasn't for Arabella, I wouldn't mind it a bit. Besides, I've always insisted, Yancey, that, if a gentleman were to turn his attention to commercial pursuits, he could make money. Look at me! I'm still a gentleman, and not too old to begin all over again, Sir!"

He had stood up, on that day, and thrown his chest out, and glared defiance, as if at a whole world of money-seeking gentlemen from whom he proposed to wrest his share of the world's goods. And he had squared his shoulders, and held his head high on that day when the last depositor of the ill-fated, ill-managed bank had been paid from the proceeds of the Marquard sale, and wet-eyed old Yancey Price had opened papers with trembling hands, and told him that he was no longer a rich man, and had left but seven thousand dollars, a right to live in the family homestead for three months, and possession of the family heirlooms. The Colonel had pored over literature with a grave face, and studied the direction for his venture. He had bought his ticket with an untrembling voice, when he, who had never been farther from home than Baltimore, decided to choose the State of Washington as the place to begin life anew. He had not confessed to a living soul the terrors that such a prodigious journey held for him, and the preparations that he made were such

as some might make when going to the heart of Africa, or on a quest for the North Pole. He had smiled at his neighbors and friends when they bade him good-by, assuring them, with that sturdy war cry of his, that "Any gentleman, if he but turn his attention to commercial pursuits, can become rich." He indulged in much flowery oratory, also, and maintained that brave fighting front, though by nights he tumbled and lay awake in his bed, thinking of all the misfortunes that had befallen his house, and wondering what was to become of Arabella if by any chance that "Yoick!" of his failed of a brush. And bravely had he stood on the platform of the rear car on the day of departure, bowing his white old head, with hat in hand, when the station, with all the crowd that had come to see him depart, receded from sight.

It had all seemed very easy, when he started, and, to fortify himself with worldly wisdom, he had read, Smiles' "Advice to Young Men," stingy interviews from Rockefeller, Morgan, Carnegie, and other renowned magnates. These had agreed that all a young man starting in life required was industry and penuriousness. Sage appealed to him quite a good deal, and he had a fond mental picture of that veteran philanthropist sedately and cautiously eating a five-cent chunk of pie, while, on the next stool at the lunch-counter, sat that other eminent humanitarian and mentor, Jay Gould. The only trouble with both of them was, from the Colonel's philosophical view-point, that each had millions before he ate the pie. He was quite sure that he, too, would be willing to lunch on a glass of milk and a piece of

pie, if he knew, at the same time, that he had seventeen hundred millions of dollars in the bank with which to buy terrapin if the pie-crop failed. Somehow all this advice they gave fell flat. He had voted for Greeley, who advised beginners to go West, and now he clung to Greeley; but the West proved strange and unhomelike. In Seattle, he had stopped at a four-dollar-a-day hotel, waiting, quite eagerly, for Miss Opportunity to interrupt him at his meals. He had listened, hungrily, for her to call him up over the telephone, always to learn that she rang for Isaac Levinsky, or Si Hawkins, and immediately after leaving the booth, both Si and Isaac usually rushed off with a sample-case to show her their wares, hot-footing it toward her abode. Yet he was undaunted. His guidon was now threadbare; his banner of intent was frayed around the edges where he had stubbornly swung it to the Washington breeze. Its letters were faded in those few weeks, but still "bore that strange device": "Any gentleman can make money, Sir, if he but turn his attention to commercial pursuits."

Now, he was on the excursion because it had been advertised as a rare bargain, and bargains had always appealed to him, whether they were for clothespins, talking machines, or dogs. Plainly, also, when he counted over his funds at the hotel before starting, he was distressed because his capital had steadily and alarmingly decreased. He felt, for a time, that it would have been better to have foregone the bargain.

"I must get to work, mighty soon," he had said. "Right soon after I get back, I must start this-here commercial pursuit. Arabella's got faith in me, and

all my neighbors down there in Chattanooga expect me to do something. Must get to work!"

Then he had sat down and read Tennyson for an hour, and had arisen much inspirited in his pursuit of millions.

Exclamations from the group of young ladies interrupted the Colonel's reverie! They were extolling —nay, rhapsodizing, over a tiny bay, a soaring cliff, gorgeous trees and lofty mountains, that swelled and blended into a picture as *The Golden Eagle* turned her quivering bow around a headland of the wonderful sound, and changed her course. The Colonel had always been afflicted with an eye for beauty.

"By Jinks!" he declared, to himself. "It is a fairy spot! I'm tired of working so hard to make a fortune. If I had that, and a house on it, and a few good hounds, and a small steam yacht, I could be right happy there with Arabella."

"I guess I can sell it to you, Friend," a voice broke in behind him, and the Colonel was bashfully aware that he had expressed his thought aloud in that moment of artistic ecstasy. He turned, and lifted his hat, glad of the opportunity to speak to anyone who would listen.

A fat, short, broad and red-faced man, smooth-shaven, smoothly groomed, in a checked suit, and wearing a large double Albert watch-chain across a very rotund frontage, smiled up at him. The Colonel was dazzled by the smile, but somewhat critical over the individual's taste. He had never approved of a checked business suit, a silk hat, a diamond shirt-stud, diamond cuff-links and a blue-bordered silk handkerchief to match blue cloth-topped patent-

leather shoes. He wished the man had a soft hat and a white handkerchief; but the eyes, which framed themselves into a vivacious, merry twinkle, held him. There were friendliness, curiosity and alert intelligence in their depths. They met other eyes fairly, and laughed, and sparkled, and expressed good humor. They suggested keenness, and many other things. They were eyes that might prove crafty, or cruel, or selfish; and yet one might be sure that they looked on life as a great joke and a splendid show.

"Yes, Sir," the little man said, hooking the thumbs of his white, pudgy hands in the arm-holes of his vest, after shoving the offensive silk hat farther back on his head, "if you like that land, I'll sell it to you. Come on now, Sir, what do you say?"

For quite a long time, the Colonel studied that blandly smiling face, and he was compelled to melt.

"I take it, Sir, that you are its owner," he said. "I'm right glad to meet you, and congratulate you on having such a splendid slice of God's beautiful earth."

"Must remember that," said the stocky man, removing his hat and looking into its crown. "Good idea for an ad! 'God's beautiful earth!' Good stuff, that." Then he replaced the hat, and looked at the Colonel.

"No," he went on, "I don't own that land. I'm a real-estate broker. Permit me."

With amazing quickness, he thrust his hand into his vest-pocket, then tendered his card. The Colonel accepted it, fumbled for his glasses, adjusted them to the bridge of his high, thin, finely cut nose, and read:

WILLIAM BURMAH JONES
Real Estate Agent
The globe for sale. Any, or all of it, at the customers' disposal. List, or buy your property from a live one, because the dead ones all specialize in cemetery lots.

Then there had been scratched out with the pen the address in Fort Scott, Kansas, and a Seattle address substituted.

"Nifty! Yes?" demanded William Burmah Jones, twinkling at the Colonel. "Shows the difference between a hustler and a fogy, eh? My mother's name was Burmah. Great for that, the old lady was. I always print it out in full because she liked it. Been gone a long time now, but I always do all I can to keep her name before the public."

The Colonel, somewhat bewildered, assured him that it was very creditable to pay so much honor to his mother's memory on a business card. Mentally he wondered if the card was an indication of what a gentleman had to do when he went out after success.

"Now, about that land," Jones continued briskly; "I can sell it to you cheap. It's a bargain, that's what it is. Observe that wonderful bay, with a natural place for wharves, sheltered from the winds and the waves! Pretty good, that! Sheltered from the winds and the waves. Ideal place, Sir! Grow anything up there on that magnificent hill behind it."

The Colonel caught his breath after this outburst.

"Of course, Sir, you have been up there on the hill to test the soil?" he asked.

"Been up there? Me? No! But Lord bless you, Man! 'tain't necessary. One can see that from here. Yes, Siree! Grow anything up there, Mister —by the way, what is your name?"

"Hatch, Sir. Alonzo Fairfax Hatch, from Chattanoogy, Tennessee."

Jones was studying the Confederate button that peeped from beneath the carnation. He now thrust out his fat, fleshy, white hand, and said:

"Glad to meet you, Colonel!" And the Colonel, so accustomed to the title, gave no thought to its use as he accepted the hand. It warmed him up to find any one in this lonesome land to whom he could talk in a friendly spirit. Jones was, at the least, company.

"Officer, just a moment, please," Jones suddenly called to the chief mate as the latter passed them. The officer halted.

"Excuse me a moment, Colonel," Jones said, hastening away to the chief mate. "Say, what's that point over there called?" he asked, in a quick mutter.

"That! It's Squaw Point."

"Thanks."

Jones returned to the Colonel.

"Now, let me see! Where were we? Oh, yes, I remember, now. We were talking about Squaw Point, that exquisite piece of nature's handiwork you see planted over there. Squaw Point can be bought, Colonel, I think. I have some connection with the family that owns it. It can be bought cheap—dirt cheap! It's a bargain, Colonel!"

The Golden Eagle swung farther around, and

now there was discernible a sand spit stretching out, and on it a hut, of the sort built by fishermen, or squatters, and a small, weather-beaten tent. From the shore line of the tiny bay stretched a shallow flat, and above that precipitously arose the splendid cliff, whose crest was wood-crowned. A canoe, with a tiny rag of discolored canvas, swept round by the steamer's stern, and a much tanned young man looked up at them with calm gray eyes, and waved a hand in response to their salute. A little distance beyond him a bearded, forlorn, slouchy fisherman paused from hauling in a net to stare at them, and they could see the silvery thrashing of fish at his feet in the bottom of the boat.

"See what a perfect place for the building of a home!" enthused Jones, calling the Colonel's attention to the wooded headland. "The bay is the place for the yacht; the hill the spot for a home. Yes, Siree! Nothing like it anywhere in the world! A paradise, that's what she is! Finest climate in the world. Wonderful timber up there. Why, I guess a man could go into the timber business, and make a fortune off'n that hillside. More money out here in timber than anywhere on God Almighty's footstool. All the millionaires out here got rich from timber. Just buy that place, cut all that magnificent timber off, take the money for it, and build a house on that cleared land, and there you are! What more could a man want?"

The Colonel tried to recall any millionaire who had made his fortune from lumbering. Neither Smiles, Carnegie, nor Sage, had given him any ad-

vice on that subject, and he was convinced that Jay Gould had had something to do with railways.

"I must be cautious," he declared to himself. "Sage taught me that. A gentleman starting out in commercial pursuits must move cautiously."

Moreover, he had somehow conceived the idea, vaguely, that he wanted to start life as a railway magnate. All the books on success he had read taught him that the first thing to do was to save money to buy the object desired. Pondering over this, while William Burmah Jones rattled off a string of amazing figures about how many shingles could be made from one small tree, and hearing nothing of the words, the Colonel came to the conclusion that he must be conservative. He would follow the books and his inclinations at the same time! That was it! Save his money, and buy a railway! He looked down at the emphatic and calculating Mr. Jones with a great resolve in his eyes.

"I'm right sorry, Sir," he said, "to disappoint you; but, while it is quite true that I have some small means, Sir, and seek investment, I favor railway projects."

"Railways? Humph! What's a railway compared with such a magnificent spot as that there is? Think of the timber, Colonel! Hundreds of thousands have been made off'n timber. Besides all that, Colonel, we need men of your character here in this growin' country. We want you with us. Maybe I can get you into the Chamber of Commerce over at Seattle, or Port Townsend. You'd be a credit to us, with all your vast knowledge of commerce and industry."

Mr. Jones failed to state that he himself was not a member of either of these bodies, and that in his pocket reposed a ticket for Spokane, some hundreds of miles distant, which, he had decided, would be his next field of conquest. Indeed, he preferred, if this sale went through, that there should be several hundred miles between him and the Colonel immediately after its consummation. A man with the whole globe for sale couldn't be expected to remain forever in one spot! It would be unjust to the globe. A dinner-bell clanged loudly through the steamer's length, and, like a war-horse hearing the bugle call for the charge, Jones sniffed the air, and lifted his head.

"That's for the chewings," he said. "Come on, Colonel. First come, first served on these barges." But the Colonel, his poetic soul still entranced by the passing scenery, was loath to miss any of it.

"Thank you kindly, Sir," he said, "for your invitation, but I think I shall fast to-day."

"See you later then, Colonel," Jones replied. But as he hastened as rapidly as his short legs would carry him in the direction of the dining-saloon, he said to himself: "Invitation? Invitation? Wonder if that old fellow was sarcastic, or really meant it. Maybe that's the way they do things down there where he come from."

Yet Mr. Jones did not appreciate the seed he had sown in the cheerful adventurer's mind, or how reluctantly the Colonel was rejecting the proposition to buy Squaw Point, the price of which, or even whether it was for sale, neither he nor Mr. Jones knew. In fact, the Colonel was wondering whether

he could not purchase the land, build a fine home on that attractive point, start a saw-mill to clear the timber, then afterward raise cotton on that noble headland. And all on less than seven thousand dollars! Perhaps the railway could wait until he had saved more money. He felt certain that Arabella, with all the dancing blood of her twenty years, and with her youthful desire for outdoors, would love this spot if he chose it for her home. He wondered if she would miss all that retinue of admirers who had known her from girlhood, paid assiduous attention to her, taken turns at trying to persuade her to marry, and kept hoping, after each rejection, that she might relent. He was not positive that he did not owe it to Arabella's happiness to buy this place for her. She was quite fond of fishing, and there were fish in the sound, he knew, because in that fisherman's boat he had seen some of them. A nice boat-house could be built somewhere down on the beach at the foot of the cliff. He imagined how nice it would look if it were built of stone, with a place beneath for a launch, and the whole upper part devoted to a den for Arabella's exclusive use. He could have a large stone fireplace, and a hard-wood floor, and big easy chairs, and a few nice rugs and skins, and one corner filled with books, all in red-morocco bindings. And so his imagination went sailing on much faster, but with far less chance of reaching a destination, than *The Golden Eagle* beneath his feet. So intent was he on the problem that he almost forgot to eat any luncheon, and was the last one to enter the saloon from which William

Burmah Jones, looking fatter than ever, panting a little from over-stuffiness, and picking his teeth, was just departing by the opposite door. The broker, holding the toothpick quite airily, waved a pudgy hand at the Colonel, who promptly removed his hat and bowed, then seated himself with a feeling of thankfulness that he was alone where he could still think over what kind of a mansion would best befit that wonderful point and prove pleasing to Arabella.

Indeed, he was quite free from any interruption throughout the remainder of the afternoon and evening, and discovered the cause when he passed the smoking-room that squatted in isolated state forward on the main deck. Jones, in shirt-sleeves, with his silk hat tilted at a belligerent angle over his fair brow, and chewing steadily at the remnant of a frayed cigar that protruded from the wrinkle at the corner of his mouth, was addressing himself in a tone of firm expostulation to three other excursionists.

"That stuff's too raw to try to pull on me," he was asserting at the moment the Colonel paused by the open window. "Any man that draws one card on me, and then tries to bluff when I've got fours, never had the benefits of learnin' this noble game in Fort Scott, Kansas. So, Siree! Why, when I think of what the boys down there would do to you infants, if you ever blew into our town, it just naturally gives me the first spell of sea-sickness I've had on this-here boat!"

And from the size of the pile of money that rested in front of Mr. Jones, the Colonel decided the statement had been but a bald utterance of truth.

CHAPTER II.

AND THE DREAMER IS WORSTED.

THE Colonel, in his room in the Seattle Hotel, was painstakingly counting his funds for the thousandth time or so, when the telephone jangled, and he was told:

"Mister William Burmah Jones calling, Sir."

It was the day after his return from the excursion, and he felt homesick. He had played one hundred straight games of patience between whiles of counting his money, and passively awaiting the opportunity to become rich. He had walked down the bustling street where prospectors, bound for the distant hills, timber-cruisers, with keen eyes and tanned faces, swaggering lumbermen seeing the sights, and sailors, with rolling progress, had alternately bumped into him as, with that worried, abstracted look on his face, he sauntered along, or halted before shop windows, thinking how much Arabella would enjoy some of the tempting articles therein exposed. Some of the lumber-jacks had sworn at him, arousing a momentary flame, for he was unaccustomed to such treatment. He had suffered the pangs of economy when he thought of the money expended on the excursion, and, remembering the eminent examples of which he had read, had tried dining on peanuts. Four bags had left him quite hungry, and he thought of Mr. Sage.

"Dog-gone my cats!" he had exclaimed. "What

I should have done was to go to a lunch counter, and eat pie and such."

So he had gone to a counter, perched on a stool beside a friendly stevedore, first assuring himself that the man was not a negro, but had merely been handling coal, and he ate fifty cents worth of pie. Total, seventy cents, when the hotel luncheon would have cost but fifty! Then, without reckoning the cost, having assured himself that such rigid economy entitled him to spend a little extra on his cigar, he had bought one for twenty-five cents instead of the usual fifteen, or two for a quarter. Immensely pleased with himself, he had gone to his room for a nap before again chasing Dame Fortune, and, after the nap, he had decided the hour was too late to seek her any further on this day.

"Send him right up, Boy," the Colonel answered the telephone, and then gathered his money together, thrust it into his pocket, and waited for the tap at the door. And he was unaware that Opportunity had come at last, heralded by the round, fat, hustling man from Fort Scott!

If the Colonel had been his long-lost father, Jones could not have greeted him with greater cordiality. For a minute or so, the Colonel feared the visitor would embrace him. Then William Burmah turned and tiptoed to the door, and jerked it open to look out into the hall. After this action he strode quickly to the locked folding doors barring the next room, and listened intently at the crack. Then he half-squatted, and peered behind a screen, and whispered hoarsely:

"Anybody here, Colonel?"

The Colonel, his eyes by this time as wide as silver quarters, assured him there was not.

"What's the matter, Sir?" the Colonel asked commiseratingly. "Police after you? Or some of these scoundrels been trying to rob you?"

Jones tiptoed across the room, removed his silk hat, and wiped his forehead with an extra handkerchief drawn from his hip-pocket, the silk polka-dotted one protruding from his coat evidently being immune from service.

"Colonel," he said, raising his pudgy forefinger, as he settled into a chair, "Colonel Hatch, me and you are goin' to make our fortunes! Yes, Siree! Our everlastin' fortunes! I'm goin' to start East next week to get hold of big capital; but I'm goin' to let you share my luck. Now! What d'you think of that?"

He got his thumbs hooked into the arm-holes of his vest, pursed his cheeks, and beamed at the Colonel with what was plainly intended to be a benevolent smile.

The Colonel, trembling with joy, hastened to thank him.

"It is right good of you, Sir, to remember me," he said. "I'd sort of worried over it the last few days; but I always said that any gentleman could make money, Sir, if he turned to commerce."

Jones hitched his chair closer, so that he could rest a friendly hand on the Colonel's knee as he talked, such having been his method since he had read a book on hypnotism.

"It's that land that your discriminatin' eye sighted

when we were on the steamer," declared Jones. "Yes, Sir, with your financial genius, you picked it out! You saw the possibilities of that bay, of that headland, of that beach. That's it, Squaw Point! I've practically taken it for you, at five thousand dollars. A rare bargain, Sir. I was afraid it would escape. The timber alone on it, in these days of vast lumber enterprises, should be worth double the money. Yes, Siree! Only five thousand cart-wheels! I was so afraid some one else would come along and get it that I just snapped it up, knowin' you would thank me for my service."

He leaned back expectantly, but a close friend of his might have read a great suspense in his eyes as he paused to see how the Colonel would take the news of such unheard-of philanthropy. As for the Colonel, some of the enthusiasm appeared to die out of his face. If he paid five thousand for the land, he would have but little more than a thousand dollars with which to plunge ahead on his reckless path to wealth. Jones, the veteran salesman of the globe, recognized the wavering, and, like a good general, hastened to rally the forces.

"Don't say a word," he whispered, as if afraid that the Colonel was about to indulge in garrulity. "Don't say a word; but listen to your Uncle Burmah! But, first, Colonel, give me your solemn word of honor, as a gentleman, that you will never let any one know, come what will, what I'm about to tell you! It might ruin me."

Probably Jones was nearer the truth than he knew, at that moment, for jails have yawned for

many a lesser offense. The Colonel assured him that his secret would forever be preserved.

"Then," said Jones, dropping his voice, and laying both hands on the Colonel's knee, "Squaw Point may become the great metropolis of this Pacific Coast! It may be the New York of the West. The world may learn to speak of Squaw Point, London, New York, Yokohama, Hamburg, in the same breath."

The Colonel began to twist uneasily. The grip on his knees tightened as if to keep him from bolting.

"You have heard of the Atlantic and Oriental Railway, ain't you?" Jones whispered, and, of course, the Colonel had heard of the projected road that had dawdled along for years, threatening at intervals to go through to the Pacific Coast, but always stopping the moment the stock-market got to the point that best suited the pockets of the great railway king, Henry Ford.

"But—but—I thought old Ford, when he died was—"

"That's just the way," interrupted Jones. "When he died his property was so big that it took years to straighten it out. His boy wouldn't foller in his dad's footsteps."

"And a mighty good thing, too, I should say," responded the Colonel, grimly, remembering the king of promoters, bribers and wreckers.

"But, now, live men have got the property," Burmah Jones went on, patiently. "They're goin' to put her through! Pierp—excuse me, I always speak of one of my best friends that way—Horgan told me so. So did Corny. That's what I always call

Wanderbilt, Corny. Just like that! It's 'Hello, Corny,' and 'Hello, Burmah,' when we meet. Pierp and Corny both told me so! They're puttin' up the coin, if someone else ain't. Now! What more do you want?"

"But," insisted the Colonel, striving by his attitude to convey the impression that he did not in the least dispute Jones' word, "what has this to do with —er—Squaw Point?"

"What has it to do with Squaw Point? Why, Colonel, I've as good as told you. Squaw Point's to be the Pacific Coast terminus of that road."

William Burmah emphasized each word by chopping it off, rolling it under his tongue, and spitting it out, after which, with a great air of triumphant assertion, he leaned back and grinned. This time there was no question. The Colonel was hooked as certainly as if he had been a bass snapping a minnow.

"And you took that land for me?" he gasped.

"That's what I did!"

The Colonel got to his feet, as did Burmah Jones, and seized both the agent's pudgy hands in his. He bubbled and overflowed with gratitude. He threatened to make a speech. His imagination kindled until the room was flooded with gold. He shifted to apprehension lest he find that slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, before he could get the deeds in his hands. He urged haste for the conclusion of the deal, and he found William Burmah Jones a ready and active ally; for Burmah was quite as eager as the Colonel to close the transaction.

"You stay right here, Colonel—right here in this

room, till I go and get the lawyer who will close this up. By the way, it'll be cash, of course."

"Certainly, Sir—certainly! I have it here with me!"

Jones plunged out; but he was torn between satisfaction and ruefulness as the elevator lowered him to the ground floor of the hotel.

"Got it with him! Humph! Why didn't I try for ten thousand!" he muttered as he puffed up the street to the office of a real-estate agent, and burst impatiently in.

"I've decided to think of that Squaw Point property you have for sale," he said, entering the agent's private office. "But two thousand is too much for it. I'll give you seventeen hundred and fifty cash. You say the title is guaranteed?"

The agent lost small time in dickering over the odd two hundred and fifty, and began filling out the deed with himself as vendor through power of attorney.

"Just make the consideration one dollar," said Burmah, over his shoulder, "and the deed read to Alonzo Fairfax Hatch. No, that ain't me, but for a client of mine. Crusty old cuss—mighty peculiar! Won't deal with no one but me. Awful funny man! You don't need to sign now, but come with me around to *The Butler*, and bring a notary with you so's there won't be any question abut your power of attorney, and all that rot. I'll give you the seventeen fifty now, and, if there's any hitch, you can give it back. I'm a sort of secretary to this old feller."

With a sallow-faced clerk from the office, they

went to *The Butler,* and up to the room where the Colonel pranced backward and forward restlessly, fearful that this golden chance for fortune would stumble *en route* to his door. With tremulous dignity he acknowledged the ostentatious introductions, and dragged open the drawer in which he had placed his money; but Burmah hastily caught his arm, and gave him a warning glance.

"I had to pay 'em," he whispered, "out of my pocket. At the last minute they were goin' to back out. You can pay me after they're gone."

The Colonel acknowledged Burmah's kindness by a warm grip of the hand, and proceeded with the formalities.

"There you are, signed and sealed and delivered," said the notary, affixing his seal.

"Then, gentlemen," said the Colonel, beaming, and possessing himself of the deed lest they recant, "our bargain is concluded. In that fair portion of the country, Sirs, from which I come, that glorious State of Tennessee, it is customary to celebrate every transaction fittingly. 'Most always, I make the juleps; but in the absence of that dream of delight—er—what will you have?"

"Nothing—never drink," snapped the visiting real-estate agent, thus confirming Burmah Jones' assertion that he and the notary were men "fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils."

The Colonel looked hurt; but Jones was already politely urging the two to depart, and assuming an air of business celerity and lack of time. They bade the Colonel and his "secretary" good-day, and hurried away. Burmah Jones listened until the elevator

gratings had clanged, then closed the door, and smiled and stared up at the Colonel.

"There she is, Friend Colonel!" Jones asserted, beaming from his five feet, two up at the Colonel's six feet, one. "There she is. A fortune! Sure's there's wool on a coon! Now you can give me that money, and then I'll take a bottle of the fizzy lubricant that makes the fountain of youth look like ditch water!"

The Colonel dragged out his bills, and painstakingly counted five thousand dollars, which sum Burmah Jones rolled into a wad and carelessly thrust into his pocket, his motion not betraying that, with the exception of two silver dollars, this was his entire earthly fortune.

"Now," said the man from Kansas, a half-hour later, obligingly, "I'll go with you to the county recorder's office, and we'll have that recorded, Colonel. Oh, no trouble at all! Glad to oblige a friend. That's all I'm doing this for, just accommodation."

The Colonel threatened for a moment to pay him a commission; but recovered in time when he remembered that his fortune had now dwindled so heavily.

"I'm right sorry, Sir," he said to Jones, "that I find myself in such straitened circumstances that I am compelled to seem delinquent in regard to your profit; but I accept your generosity in the spirit in which it is offered, and wish to assure you, Mister Jones, that when I make money from this venture of ours, I shall requite you as best lies in my power. It is customary with the Hatches, Sir, never to forget a friend or a foeman."

Had the Colonel been sufficiently observant, he would have discovered that William Burmah Jones lost a trifle of his ruddy color at the concluding part of the sentence; but the same William Burmah was as quick at recovery as a cat is in finding its feet.

"Don't mention it, Colonel. Forget all about me," he said, fervently. "Now to record this precious document."

Quite merrily they passed up the street together to the little old court-house on the hill, where they found the recorder very busy. He took time to jerk the paper open and glance at it, then at the Colonel.

"Yes, Sir, it's mine," asserted the Colonel, proudly.

The recorder looked from him to Jones, and studied the latter the more. He did not seem to have ever before seen Mr. Jones, a surprising circumstance, considering that the latter was supposed to be in the real-estate business in Seattle.

"Beats all what some people are buying these days," he said, tentatively.

Jones glared at him indignantly; but the Colonel, striving to appear nonchalant in the face of his bargain, said:

"Yes, Sir; there is opportunity at every door. Timber lands in this great new State are all valuable."

"Timber land! Humph! That patch off up there at Squaw Point was cut off nearly ten years ago. The timber on that ain't worth six bits!"

"We want that recorded," Jones hastened to interrupt, with insistent firmness, and endeavoring to close the conversation.

"Well, you can record it here if you wish," said the recorder, sourly; "but it ought, by rights, to be recorded, also, in the county where the sale is made."

Jones flushed at being exposed in ignorance.

"Oh, that's all right," he said, airily. "We shall record it there later. Come on, Colonel. I suppose we can get this deed about to-morrow or the next day?" he asked, addressing himself to the official.

"To-morrow morning," said the recorder, "or in two hours, if there is any dadbinged hurry about it!"

The Colonel hastened to mollify him by saying that the next day would do, and, arm-in-arm with Burmah Jones, passed out into the light of a day that seemed joyous and young and filled with great hopes. The Colonel drew a sigh of relief.

"Well," he declared, "that lifts a mighty big load from my mind. I had begun to believe that it was not so easy to make a fortune; but that just shows how a man can be mistaken, Sir. Why, do you know, when I stop to think that yesterday I was a comparatively poor man, and that to-day I have laid the foundation for a new estate, it seems almost impossible! I must buy back the Marquard plantation with the first money I get."

He had a warmth of friendship and affection for the short fat man who toddled alongside him, and, overcoming his customary scruples, poured into Burmah's ears the story of his life, the pride of his house, the love for his daughter, and went into details of the marvelous venture on which he had started forth. Burmah began to have qualms of conscience,

which proved the Colonel's homely eloquence; for the conscience of Burmah Jones, through many years of dormancy, had become extremely hard to arouse. It had a well-developed, chronic case of the sleeping sickness. Once or twice the little man shoved his silk hat back and frowned absently ahead, and again, when the Colonel touched on that rare affection, more fragrant through memory, which he cherished for Arabella, Jones' hand crept up and felt the roll of bills that had been transferred to the inside of his waistcoat, as if by that magic touch to steel himself against sentiment.

They dined together, sumptuously, recklessly, at the Colonel's expense, and throughout that time the ancient adventurer, rejuvenated, built air-castles of grandeur. Jones had to tear himself away from his host, and immediately outside the door gave a snarling "Humph!" the meaning of which he alone knew. The Colonel, to the contrary, was so gay that, when alone, he hummed in his cracked old voice those war-like tunes of the Confederacy with which he had been wont in youth to charge to victory. Alone in his room, he jubilated. . . . Alone in his room, Burmah swore.

"Damn that old cuss!" he roared, impatiently, staring at himself in the mirror. "Why did he go and tell me all that stuff about his daughter, and what he hoped to do for her? Always for this-here Arabella! Arabella! Nice old-fashioned name. If I didn't need the money so bad, I'll swear I'd put the whole caboodle in an envelope, and send it to him. Ain't it just my luck to get hold of a sucker like

that! Maybe I'd better start East to-morrow. It'd make me feel rotten mean to see him after he finds out that Squaw Point ain't worth ten dollars. Wonder if it is, now? Wonder if there ain't some way I could get his money back for him, and keep mine at the same time?"

He stood for a full minute, staring at the pattern of the carpet, as if balancing and weighing an idea, communing with some hidden financial Genius with whom he argued silently. He shook his head impatiently, at last, and turned his back to the mirror, as if rather reluctant to face his own presentment on that clear, unfaltering surface.

"He's got more money left," he said stubbornly, as if ending a debate, "and, if I'm goin' to be a hog, I'll be a good one. I'll get that, too! Poor old feller!"

With which amicable admixture of crooked desire and laudable pity, William Burmah Jones now scowled savagely and rebelliously at the fat face in the mirror, and hurriedly switched off the lights lest it further accuse him.

CHAPTER III.

BUT THE KNAVE DEVELOPS A CONSCIENCE.

After pitching about more or less during the night, made restless by that newly and curiously aroused conscience of his, Burmah Jones arose and threw open the shades of his window. The early workmen were steadily tramping the streets toward their tasks, just as the last of the roysterers and gamblers were unsteadily turning homeward. He yawned at them, and stuck his pudgy hands in the waistband of his pajamas. His scant hair was ruffled around his Napoleonic head, and his eyebrows were twisted into long gray tangles. He stood and scowled at awakening Seattle while he reflected on a very checkered career. He went to the faucet and drank copiously as if to wash a bad taste from his mouth, found a half-smoked cigar on the floor, and lighted it, rolled himself into the depths of an easy chair, and hung his bare feet on the window sill.

Plainly, he had not been able to dismiss his latest conquest from mind, for instantly, awake, he was fighting its ethics over again.

"Burmah," he said to himself, "it's been your business to trim suckers, and take chances on being trimmed. Some of 'em have done the last. Sometimes you waded in where the water was deep and cold; but now you've gone and done it for sure. You've buncoed a poor, confidin' old cuss of sixty-five, that ain't never had a chance to cut his wisdom

teeth. It's too plagued much like stealin' ear-trumpets from a home for old deaf ladies."

He lapsed into a melancholy heap of fat, and twisted, rolled and chewed the cigar butt from one corner of his mouth to the other. There were those, familiar with him in past days of fight, prosperity, and enterprise, who would have taken alarm at that symptom of mental activity, and hastened away to lock safes, and secrete family silver, pocketbooks, or anything else that wasn't securely fastened beyond hope of being pried loose.

That look was on his face throughout the forenoon, and still there when, in the late afternoon, he went, hesitantly, to the Colonel's hotel. It had taken much resolution on his part to face the Colonel. He felt like a murderer visiting the morgue to look at his victim. He glanced through the big plate-glass window in front of the hotel lobby, and saw the dupe, with a beatific expression on his face, asleep in one of the big leather chairs.

"There he is," said Burmah to himself. "Now, ain't he a picture of a hustling young man startin' out to make his fortune? He's a rare old specimen of a gent startin' out to make dead-oodles of money in commercial pursuits! Humph!"

If the real-estate agent lacked anything, it was not "hustle," and full appreciation of a "hustler." He had never been accused of incompetence, and it exasperated him to come in contact with a man of the Colonel's stamp.

"I come up here to sympathize with him," he went on in self-communion, "and what do I see? That old Rebel crowbait a-sittin' there asleep! Serves him

right. Now, I'm goin' in to get the rest of his roll, hang him!"

He trudged determinedly into the hotel lobby, and laid a heavy hand on the Colonel's shoulder.

"Yes, dear," the Colonel's sleepy voice muttered, and he sat up, and blinked his eyes in bewilderment as he realized that he was not home in his library, being aroused by Arabella. His fine old face flushed, and he hastened to get to his feet, and take the pudgy, reluctant hand of William Burmah Jones. The roar of street-cars abruptly assailing the Colonel's ears, the clatter of hotel conversation, told him that, as far as he was concerned, Chattanooga was millions of miles away.

"I thought—I thought—I was home again," he apologized, lamely, and Burmah's anger was supplanted by something as near to pity as he ever approached. "And—and I've been waiting for you, my friend, because, somehow, I seem sort of helpless in my plans. I forgot, Sir, to ask you yesterday how you would advise me to go about getting the money from that Squaw Point. It is inexperience, Sir, that makes me so slow and deliberate. I'm a tiger for work. A regular demon for accomplishing. Show a Hatch the way, and he'll rip the stars down to plant them in his flower-beds. As General Robert E. Lee once said to me, Sir: 'There are none of your family that are not——' "

"Did you get that deed from the local recorder's office, and send it up to the other county seat?" asked Burmah, frowning at him.

"I forgot all about that important necessity," the Colonel confessed.

"Well, I guess you ought to do that," Burmah said, grimly. "S'pose that real-estate man was crooked, like some of 'em are, and sold Squaw Point to some other feller, and the other feller beat you to the recorder's office? Huh? What d'you think would happen to you then?"

"Why, bless my soul!" said the Colonel, emphatically. "I never thought of that!—no, Sir, not once."

He was in a momentary panic at the suggested danger.

"Boy, get me a cab—quick!" he shouted at a passing bell-boy, so loudly that every man in the rotunda turned and looked at him, wondering whether he had missed a train, or a murder. He fairly danced up and down in impatience as he admonished the boy to haste. If he had been ordering an aëroplane in order to escape from an earthquake, he could have been no more earnest or excited. His coat-tails flapped vigorously, he gesticulated with his long arms until his celluloid cuffs rattled like castanets, and his big slouch hat worked forward over his brow until it threatened to blindfold him. Burmah, impertubable, with a freshly lighted cigar projecting from the wrinkle in the corner of his straight-cut mouth, watched him, not without a suspicion of a smile in his eyes.

"Calm yourself, Colonel," he admonished—and he pronounced it as "cam." "Just calm yourself. You ain't goin' to save time by takin' the roof off this hospitable inn."

He led the excited financier out to the curb, saw him into the cab, and instructed him to ask the

county recorder where the deed should be sent for its second record. Then he waved his hand airily, and said:

"See you to-morrow. Busy to-night. Don't worry. Don't let the recorder pick your pockets, and be sure not to blow the gas out when you go to bed. So long, old hoss!"

The Colonel was too excited to be indignant over this familiarity. He did not appreciate the struggle of emotions that still possessed the soul of his new-found friend, Burmah Jones. And Burmah, waddling down the street, was expostulating with himself, and forever coming back to the same point:

"I'm an old crook, and I need money; but I just can't take it away from that old cuss! He'll be the ruination of me yet! I feel it in my bones!"

It may have been the "feeling in his bones" that led him to return to the hotel, and to walk backward and forward in his room for a long time; that sent him down to the wharves, where he studied the shipping with the eye of an amateur; and that, later in the evening, caused him to sit in the well-padded alcove of a St. James Street resort, looking as morose as a fat man can look. He sat where he could let his sharp, intelligent eyes wander vacantly over the crowd that came in, imbibed, and passed out, or paused to loiter in front of the garish bar, and stare at the ornate cut glass. One man interested him more than any of the others. This was a melancholy-appearing young gentleman of an indefinite age, whose hair, worn very straight and very long, was prematurely streaked with gray, a man

who had the eyes of a dissipated poet, and the finest of features, and wore, despite the warmth of the evening, a mantle that might have done service in the *Quartier Latin* in Paris, as a cape for a Roumanian guardsman, or a dress-coat for a München professor of letters. This man was the picture of complete dejection, as he stood at the end of the bar, nodding to acquaintances, accepting every proffered drink, and purchasing nothing. Between whiles, with long, white, slender fingers, he drew geometrical designs on the bar from the overflow of numerous glasses of beer. To this forlorn individual, entered another man, sturdy, sun-tanned, wearing the regulation white, dented Western hat, and carrying a suit-case. At sight of each other, they rushed to a hand-clasp and much greeting. They sat in the little stall immediately behind Burmah, and he could hear their conversation.

"Well, Fred, you are still here, eh? I heard you were in Seattle," said the sturdy man. It was easy to identify him by the vigor of his voice.

"Yes. But where did you come from, and where do you go?"

"From Juneau, and going to South Dakota."

There was a moment's silence, as if each were looking at the other, or thinking, and then the sturdy voice burst out, impetuously:

"Fred, I want you to come with me. I can give you work. You're too good an engineer, too good an all-round man, to throw yourself away on fool ideas. That year in Paris ruined you. You're out for this art-for-art-sake's stuff. It won't do! It's rot! You want to build the 'City Beautiful.'

Pshaw! Leave that for the ladies who write for the ladies' journals. You want to do the up-lift stunt in architecture. That's all bunk! You tried to lecture on it, and went bust. You came out to the Pacific Coast to try your hand at it, and what's the West done for you? Listened to you, laughed at you, and made a plain drunkard out of you! Isn't that so? We went over the Boston Tech. hurdles together, and I know you. Cut it out. Now, listen!"

There was some mumbled response that sounded to Burmah like a protest; but the stronger man's voice drowned opposition.

"I've got a job. Don't know how long it will last. It's doing surveys for the A. and C. Railway. It may be a bluff, and it may be steady work. I want you to come with me, cut out the booze; and I'll give you a boost with the chief. Will you come? I leave in half an hour."

"No, I won't come."

The reply was petulant in its positiveness, and the conversation drifted into personal channels that no longer interested William Burmah Jones, who had suddenly shoved his hat to the back of his head, leaned his elbows and arms on the marble-topped table in front of him, and begun drumming upon it with his fat fingers, which somehow betrayed a certain decisiveness of character, as if fatness did not extend to the soul of their owner. What he had heard was galloping through his head, and, shrewdly, he was drawing conclusions, and formulating plans; nor would he have acknowledged to himself that there was anything of philanthropy, of kind-

ness, or of sentiment in the scheme that was unfolding itself, leaf by leaf, as an open book, thrown carelessly on a table, adjusts itself. He reached a finger over to the push-button in the upholstered wall beside him, and pressed it. Then, the finger slipped back into his vest-pocket, fumbled therein, produced a five-dollar bill, and wadded it before the waiter appeared. Jones' face masked itself into that of a merely jolly, careless, prosperous fat man.

"Bring me a plain seltzer water," he said; and then, as the waiter started to hurry away: "But hold on a minute." He leaned closer, smiled, and whispered: "What's the name of that long-haired architect—engineer chap, that I see around? I think he's in the next stall behind me here."

The waiter craned his neck back, and looked around into the other compartment.

"I don't know," he whispered hoarsely, and then eyed the bill that Burmah had suddenly opened and was smoothing out on the table-top. He looked suggestively at the speculator, and was not disappointed.

"Too bad!" declared Burmah, in an almost tearful whisper. "Too bad! I was going to give you this if you knew."

"You were, eh? Well, say, Boss, for that I'd choke him till his tongue stuck out, and he told me in his delirium," asserted the waiter. "Leave it to me!"

He hastened away to get the seltzer. He whispered to the nearest bar-tender, who sauntered carelessly down to the end of the bar, and stared. The bar-tender whispered to the next bar-tender, and he

in turn stared, and then bent far across the polished wood to whisper to another lounger, who carelessly traversed the length of the room, halted in front of the compartment, said, "Hello Fred," and went back to convey the information.

"His name's Fred Hubbard," whispered the waiter into Burmah's ear. "He's a queer guy. Got a crack in his punkin.' Wants to make towns look right. Tried it on Seattle, but they didn't fall for his graft."

"Good! You win!" said Burmah, shoving the bill toward him. "Pay for this decoction of slough water, and keep the change."

Even as the waiter hurried away, Jones was pulling his stubby legs into shape, and scrambling out from behind the table. He was not in the least affected by modesty. Indeed, audacity seemed to be his forte. He calmly ignored the seltzer he had ordered, got up, and with a pretense of looking at a ticker at the end of the room, walked past the place where the engineers were talking. He started as if surprised, halted at the end of the table, rested his knuckles on it, and said:

"Excuse me. You are Mister Frederick Hubbard, ain't you? My name's William Burmah Jones. I heard you lecture once on this scheme of makin' towns look good. I've tried to paint some of 'em myself; but they never stood for it. But I liked your idea. I've always wanted to have a talk with you, my boy. Might be you and me could do some business."

Burmah stared steadily at Hubbard, who, gratified by even so small a recognition, stood up to shake

hands. He would have introduced Burmah to the engineer; but the latter, discovering a necessity for haste, brusquely passed it over, and, after once more urging his friend to drop the idea of cities beautiful, gave an address, which Hubbard wrote down, and Jones memorized, then made his departure. Jones took the vacant seat, and ordered some more seltzer water for himself, and something stronger for Hubbard, and tactfully led the poet-artist-engineer on to discourse of his ideals. An attentive listener was Burmah Jones; but his eyes were either appraising, or meditative, as he sat there beside the table, chewing, everlastingly chewing, or rolling his cigar. Sometimes he studied the face across from him, a face fired with enthusiasm as its owner talked. Here and there fell a word of flattery, so subtle as to be almost a caress, and then, suddenly, the masterful man leaped out from behind the fat, as his appraisement was complete.

"The trouble with you, Hubbard, is that you're a boozer! You drink too much."

Purposely he had fired this shot of antagonism, and he watched the other man straighten himself to a semblance of dignity; but Jones gave him no time to protest.

"Don't try to tell me you ain't!" he snapped. "I know. I can read the signs as if they were crossing boards for a railway, which said, 'Look out for the engine.' I've got a job of surveyin'—nothin' else for you, maybe! Understand that? Maybe! If you make good, and things go right, you might get a chance to show us some of this 'City Beautiful'

rot. But you'll have to do the work for small pay, and cut this stuff out!"

He seized the unemptied glass in front of Hubbard as he spoke, turned, and dumped its contents on the floor beside him.

"You're hired!" he declared. "No more of this till you're through with me. I'm the boss. You come to the hotel Wickard to-morrow morning at eight o'clock—not a minute later—and ask for William Burmah Jones. Got a transit or a theodolite? If you haven't, rent one. Now, go home and sober up."

With which brutal order, he got up and walked out before the astonished Frederick Hubbard could recover.

In just ten minutes, Burmah was battering on the door of Colonel Alonzo Hatch's room, where the Colonel, well dined, was comfortably reclining in an easy chair. Burmah did not wait for a summons to enter, but burst in as if he had been fired from a torpedo tube. He was a man of merriment now, a boy breaking into a comrade's apartment.

"Colonel," he shouted, "I've something for you! Good news. You're to start a town. You're to hustle. You're to make a wad of money. Me and you'll smash 'em hard."

"I always insisted," began the Colonel, in a jubilant, self-satisfied voice, "that any gentleman, did he——"

"And you're right!" interrupted Burmah. "Well, take it for as good as done. "Now, see here, Colonel, I've taken a real, sure-enough interest in

"I've hired a man who will make Squaw Point the most beautiful city in the world."

you. I've done you a favor without askin' you anything about it."

The Colonel did not hesitate to thank his benefactor, not only in his own behalf, but in the name of Arabella.

"Colonel," said Burmah, buttonholing the head of the Hatch family, and lowering his voice to a most impressive tone, "I've hired a man for you who will make Squaw Point the most beautiful city in Washington, in the West, in the United States of America, in the world."

His voice rose to a triumphant note, and the Colonel's eyes opened, and his hands trembled. Perhaps it was with a perfervid desire to escape the hands of Burmah Jones, which had seized him by the coat-lapel and strenuously jerked as each comparison was voiced.

"I've hired that genius of landscape-gardening, Frederick Hubbard, to lay out a modern and glorious city on your land," Burmah said, impressively, and stood back and stuck his thumbs into their habitual resting place to gloat over his achievement.

The Colonel had never heard of Frederick Hubbard, but mentally decided he must be "some shakes." The very attitude of his intimate friend and counsellor, William Burmah Jones, indicated as much. Far be it from him, the head of the Hatch family, to be laggard in recompense. No one could be more magnanimous than a Hatch.

"Then," said the Colonel, oracularly, and assuming the pose that had been his favorite when addressing his fellow citizens in Chattanooga on festal

occasions, "I shall deem it an honor, Sir, if you will permit me the gratification of insisting that for your enterprise you shall share in the pecuniary rewards. Frederick Hubbard, Sir, is a man to be esteemed. He is all that makes for good Americanism. He is one of our most worthy citizens. Yes, Sir! One of the great men of the day." He paused, and seemed to be thinking for an instant. "By the way, who in the deuce is this man, Hubbard?" he asked. "I can't just remember what he has done."

"Done? Done? Why, Colonel, he is the author of the 'City Beautiful.' The renowned lecturer! He's a cheese! He's a riprinosticum snooter, he is. Now, about the rewards, what I might suggest is this, Colonel; not that I want money so much, but that it's only fair, and business is business. We'll get this man to lay out a 'City Beautiful' up there. You will give me some of the lots on the main street, just a few. You get the profits from the rest. We'll sell 'em off, so as to start a town. Not that I would part with any of this valuable property, but we must be liberal, Colonel Hatch. We must let others share our prosperity. There is another reason for disposin' of some of it, and that is so's you won't be lonesome up there, all alone. Of course, Colonel, I don't speak so much of you as I do of your dear daughter, Miss Arabella. She shall look at it and feel at home, knowin' that it has been started by her father. Are you on, Colonel? Do you get me? I get some of the lots. I handle it for your benefit. The lots will perhaps pay my expenses, but that don't matter. Colonel, you are

launched on the road to fortune. To-morrow, at ten-thirty, the boat sails, and we will meet on the wharf!"

The Colonel had no time to think. He was swept off his feet by this whirlwind. He glowed in his endeavor to thank Burmah Jones for his kindness, and began to think of a speech; but, before it could vent itself, Burmah had slapped him on the back and rushed for the elevator. His last injunction, not to miss the boat, was wafted up from the elevator shaft like something left behind.

"Fortune! Fortune! Kindly maid, I thank thee!" said the Colonel, poetically, after he had returned to his room.

"If things will only go my way," ruminated Mr. Jones, ploughing along the street, "a spring lamb in April won't be half as cold as some of these Seattle boys when I get through shearin' 'em on this deal. I'll put overcoats at a premium to shed off chills whenever they hear the name of William Burmah Jones!"

CHAPTER IV.

AND CONSCIENCE INVOLVES HIM.

The Colonel was like one in his second youth when, on the following morning, the party sailed outward on the sound steamer. He hummed snatches of song; he expatiated in rounded, grandiloquent periods on the beauty of the scenery, the day and the excellence of the boat. He was flooded by the sunlight of accomplishment. Hubbard, somewhat shaky, decidedly threadbare, and chafing at the restraint of that inexorable monster, Burmah Jones, watched him with astonishment. Burmah, cynical, thoughtful and keen, saw to two things: that Hubbard kept dry, and that the Colonel kept enthused. Apparently these were his only tasks; but, in truth, he was spinning mental webs to be thrown out on the winds, at a later time, in which fools might enmesh themselves. He was calculating what could be done with the tools at hand and such money as he cared to expend on his scheme. He was no longer trammeled by introspection. All the yesterdays were gone—only the to-morrows were filled with fear.

"The old Colonel's a good advertisement in himself," he thought, "and I'll make this chump engineer, or gardener, or whatever he thinks he is, more famous than he's ever been in his life. If I can skin enough out of it on the first leap then it's me to get away before the sun shines on this soap-bubble, and bursts her wide open."

But all these meticulous projects did not in the

least show themselves on his face. Outwardly, he was merely good-humored. There was nothing to indicate either his extraordinary energy, his unending persistence, or his pugnacious temperament.

The steamer swung her nose cautiously into the bay, where the two fishermen stared upward in positive amazement, so long had it been since any one paused at Squaw Point. The captain on the end of the bridge cupped his hands, and vented a shout that simulated the siren of his craft more than anything human.

"Hey! You men! Can't you come over here, and land three passengers for me?"

"Tell 'em there's a dollar in it for them," Burmah called up, whereupon the captain made the proffer, and whatever spell of lethargy held the fishermen was dissipated as they fell to their oars. They came alongside; the three visitors to Squaw Point clambered out over the strake and into the bow of the boat; Burmah Jones called, "Be sure to pick us up on the return trip to-night," and the steamer's bells clanged, and she moved away.

Washington crossing the Delaware was not half so excited as Colonel Hatch crossing to Squaw Point. He stood up in the boat, with his feet surrounded by fish, the wind moving his white locks, and rapture on his kindly old face.

"Gentlemen, there she is!" he exclaimed, exuberantly. "The fairest spot in all the North-west. The garden of the sovereign State of Washington. The rose on the palpitating breast of the queen of mountains."

One of the rowers, afflicted with a sense of humor,

missed a stroke, the boat lurched, and the Colonel sat suddenly down, on and amidst the fish. They flapped vigorously with what life was left in them, and the Colonel, disgusted not so much at the accident as by the abrupt termination of what had promised to be a highly poetic speech, recovered himself, and sat meekly on a board across the thwarts.

"Pshaw!" he said, proceeding to wipe his coat-tails with his handkerchief. "Wasn't that right aggravating!"

And then, his transports of oratory abated, and suddenly appreciating the ridiculousness of his finale, he, too, laughed. Through it all, Hubbard sat staring ahead at the splendid bay, the noble hills and the towering background, seeing dream castles springing upward for his first "City Beautiful," visualizing with clarity the pictures in his mind. The rowers gawped at the transit that lay across his knees, and mumbled to each other.

"Maybe they're timber-cruisers, eh, Flay?" one asked; and the other said, "They mout be."

The boat landed on the beach, and Burmah's keen eyes picked out the young man they had seen in the canoe on the preceding trip. The man stood in front of his tent, comfortably smoking a well-seasoned pipe, but evinced no curiosity.

"Who is that fellow?" demanded Burmah of one of the fishermen.

"Him? Name's Lester. Yank from down Bosting way. Out for a rest and his health, he says. Fishes and hunts all the time, when he ain't just plain loafing."

Burmah continued to stare for a moment, then turned to the engineer.

"Want these fellers to help?"

"Yes, we shall need a flagman or two."

"Pull the boat up on the beach," Burmah ordered the two fishermen, who stood, pictures of dilapidation and shiftlessness, waiting for their dollar or instructions. "We want you two fellers to help make a survey. You'll get paid better than fishin'. Get a move on you."

He turned and looked at the Colonel, who, with arms folded, and head thrown back, was giving himself over to a vast admiration of his property.

"Colonel," Burmah said, "if we're goin' to get through in time to take the steamer back, we've all got to help. I suppose we'd best go right up to the top first, eh?"

"I was just about to suggest that," the Colonel agreed.

"Now, Hubbard, show us what you can do," Burmah said to the engineer briskly. "Everybody's at your service, ain't they, Colonel?"

"You fairly took the words out of my mouth," said the Colonel, still convinced that he was adroitly and personally managing the whole enterprise.

Burmah pulled a roll of paper from his pocket, unfolded some strips of cloth, and said:

"Here, you two men! Go and cut some long poles. That's right, ain't it, Colonel? Flags for survey, eh?"

"Yes, Sir. Please, go and cut the poles, gentlemen. And, by the way, what might your names be?"

"Skaggs is mine, but my partner calls me Hank,"

said the first one. "His name's Flavius Josephus Banks—Flay for short."

The Colonel shook hands with due decorum, and insisted on introducing his companions, despite the fact that Burmah was dancing around restlessly, as if eager to have this "City Beautiful" started, and finished. Hank and Flavius Josephus led the way up a path that rambled in and out in a steep ascent through the glories of the undergrowth, where wild flowers cropped up between the rocks, vines in blossom sprang pell-mell over miniature precipices, and young trees started from stumps of ancient cuttings. Here and there, where trees had been too gnarled, or too small, to be available for lumbering, whole groups of them stood as if watching the advent of the adventurers. Hubbard, thinking of his great artistic venture, but not quite confident as to what Burmah Jones intended to do, forgot his thirst, and his eyes glowed with the enthusiasm of the zealot. Here it was, at hand, the place to build the most exquisite little city in the West. At the top, he saw, spread before him, a plateau, almost level, narrowing at the distant end to the precipitous cliff against which the languid waves of the sound throbbed and sang. Behind him came the steep ascent, in terraces, up which he had climbed, and far back, step by step, the rise of hills leading up to the crowning mountains, which seemed to have established themselves to shelter this long, beautiful peninsula.

"Now, what we want laid out first," declared Burmah, wasting no time, "is the main business street. "Isn't that right, Colonel?"

"It is," solemnly assented the Colonel, feeling for

all the world like Christopher Columbus taking possession of a new land.

"But, gentlemen," expostulated the engineer, still intent on making the future city of Squaw Point a model for the world to view with pleasurable envy, "I must have time to consider the land, the topography, the forthcoming necessities of commerce."

Burmah opened his lips to consign the forthcoming necessities and all such rubbish to the discards; but held his peace when he perceived the Colonel's face. The old veteran was in an ecstasy of enthusiasm. The word, "commerce," had struck a responsive chord, like the echo of his shibboleth. To elevate commercial pursuits that he might prove his gentlemanly qualifications, what but that was his mission?"

"Mister Hubbard, Sir," he said in his most grandiose manner, "I thank you for so directly suggesting my own thoughts. I heartily agree with you. Let us spare no pains, or loving care, to make this God's city! Let it be an honor, Sir, to all of us. My daughter, Miss Arabella, would express the same high sentiment were she here to share with us this blissful moment—the moment when we are about to plan something of which we may all be proud. Take all the time you wish, Sir."

"But, Colonel, the steamer! We won't catch it back to Seattle if we put in too much time here," protested Burmah, removing his hat, and, in his agitation, using the sacred blue-bordered handkerchief to wipe his moist brow.

"To hades with the steamer!" said the Colonel, magnificently. "What is the catching of a steam-

boat, Sir compared with such an enterprise as this?"

It was futile to argue now that the Colonel was fired with the great idea. In the wake of the Colonel and the artistic engineer, Burmah trudged about over that point of land all the afternoon, his short legs quaking beneath him as the march progressed, and he reduced weight more rapidly than he had ever contemplated when reading anti-fat advertisements. Behind him followed the two fishermen, steadily and placidly chewing tobacco and without any more expression on their faces than cud-chewing sheep. Indeed, they resembled mountain goats more than anything else as their whiskers wagged in time to their plodding steps. Patiently too, they carried the poles, never offering to lay them down, but intent only on earning their daily wages from this unexpected windfall. They might even have repeated the words of the cannibal chief who had reverted from his conversion, and said, at sight of a fat man:

"See, Brother, what God has sent us?"

And so it came to pass that when the steamer called in, that night, Burmah Jones was the only one to embark, the Colonel having nonchalantly told him to go ahead with his plans for selling off some of the property, and promising to be with him on the following day. As for the Colonel, he had explained to the fishermen that he would accept their hospitality for himself and Hubbard. They protested that they had no place to keep guests, but the Colonel assured them what was good enough for them would serve him. They explained that their fare was meager; but the Colonel airily dismissed this objection with the statement that the scenery in itself

was a feast. Consequently, despite themselves, Skaggs and Flay found themselves hosts to two dreamers, dreamers who made merry over their dinner, and sat on a bench in front of the cabin, and smoked, after the moon had arisen. From the tent near by came the sound of whistling; and, later, the Colonel and the engineer were joined by the young man with the steady gray eyes.

"Mister Lester, Sir, I believe," the Colonel said, getting to his feet. "Permit me, Sir, the honor of introducing to you my dear friend, one of the world's greatest artistic engineers, Mister Frederick Hubbell, known everywhere as the father of———"

"Hubbard! Hubbard, my name is," interposed the author of the "City Beautiful."

"And my name, Sir, is Hatch, Alonzo Fairfax Hatch," the Colonel went on unblushingly, in his soft, musical drawl; and then, before Lester could seat himself, he had launched into the great scheme of making Squaw Point the most heavenly spot on the globe. The idea was growing with snow-ball rapidity. Already the Colonel saw himself fathering a community of prosperous, delighted souls, dwellers in Utopia.

Lester had small need to seek health, so far as appearance went; for he stood close upon six feet, was broad-shouldered, deep-chested and tanned to a healthy brown. He seemed anything but loquacious; yet, had he been so, he would have found small opportunity in this outpouring of the Colonel's imagination. He stood where the light through the open door of the cabin shone on him, his fair face expressing keen, though whimsical, enjoyment at

what the veteran was saying. Hubbard, too, interested him, and with curious eyes he scrutinized the engineer to discover, if possible, what form of madness possessed this man. He seemed most entertained by the Colonel's theory that any gentleman could make money from commerce if the notion seized him, and led him on, by a few adroit questions, until the Colonel had, with child-like simplicity, confided the history of his entire past life. Lester did not permit himself to laugh until he had bade them good-night and found the seclusion of his tent. Then he gave himself over to mirth.

As for the Colonel, he was deeply touched when the fishermen insisted that their bunks should be given over to the guests, while they themselves slept on the floor with one blanket under, and one over them, and their boots for pillows. But they were not to go unrewarded. On the evening following, mellowed by his day's work and the growing projects, the Colonel quite magnanimously presented them with the land on which their cabin stood.

And thus was made the first transfer of a part of that property from which the Colonel proposed to amass a fortune, a fine strip of what, if Squaw Point should ever become a city, would be the choicest bit of the water-front.

CHAPTER V.

THE DREAMER'S DAUGHTER FAIR JOURNEYS.

Down in Chattanooga, Arabella Hatch, daily receiving proposals of marriage from eligible young men, and attending garden parties and teas under the chaperonage of a distant cousin, was wavering as to whether or not she should accept Kirby Smith, or one of the others. She had no ardent love for Kirby, nor dislike. In a strange indecision she continued until a telegram from the Colonel brushed hesitation aside, and threw her into a state of unbounded enthusiasm. Sitting in a hammock, with Kirby in a garden chair at her side—he had made his fifth proposal of marriage—she saw the messenger boy approaching, and for a moment her heart gave a check of the sort that attacks those who receive few messages by wire other than chronicles of disaster or death. Her hands trembled as they tore the yellow envelope open, and Kirby Smith, clean and graceful, leaned forward and watched her, his face depicting love and sympathy. Then, to his relief, she bounced from the hammock, and executed a very fair imitation of Genée doing a flower-dance.

"There," she exclaimed, rapturously, "I told you-all it would happen! It's Daddy! He's done it!"

"Done what?" drawled Kirby, rather disappointed that he was not to have the opportunity of acting as comforter.

"Made his everlasting fortune," jubilantly replied Arabella. "Here, read this, if you don't believe it!"

She handed the pages of the open message to her

most persistent admirer who took them and scanned them, not without a sly smile of amusement.

"Dear Arabella," it read. "You will doubtless remember former statement mine any gentleman could make money if turned attention commercial pursuits. Bought glorious place for home with nice bay for yacht. Waters most hundred feet deep. Lots timber and Burmah says there's a fortune in it. Burmah thinks saw mill might make good. Beautiful place for house. Am going into railway business indirectly. Wire me when you start. Better buy a linen duster to wear on train because it's dusty this time year. Your old red tam o'shanter cap will be ideal for traveling. Don't ever open window at foot of your berth because your feet will get cold crossing mountains. Bring Uncle Jeff and Aunt Sally with you. There are no Jim Crow cars but they have immigrant sleepers. Dad."

Kirby Smith finished reading the message, and, having just graduated from law school, began to practise his profession by picking flaws in the telegram.

"Who is Burmah? Is that a code word?" he inquired, politely.

Arabella did not know whether it was a code word, a man, or a patent medicine.

"It doesn't matter about that," she insisted. "What counts is that Dad has made his fortune, and bought a place, and is going to have a yacht, and go into the lumber-business."

"But what foozles me," replied Kirby, "is how in the deuce he could have done it so quickly. I know they have gold mines out there in Seattle, and all that, but it takes time to mine gold."

"Rubbish! Leave it to Dad!" retorted Arabella, with an airy snap of her fingers. "Anyhow, I shall do as he says, and go West at once. But, just now, I am going over to the tennis courts."

"Me, too!" cheerfully asserted Kirby.

And, on the way to the courts of the club to which they belonged, he decided that the quick fortune must have been made from speculation. There was a rush to meet the two when they appeared at the court, where three airily clad young men were industriously swinging their rackets.

"There they are, hang 'em!" grimly remarked Kirby Smith, his expression indicating supreme contempt for three of his classmates, who, also, had just taken their degrees in law. But neither William Reynolds, known as "Little Billy," because he was a young giant, Harry Pickett, known as "Pick," nor Thomas Travers, known as "Tommy," appeared to mind anything save the presence of Arabella, who greeted them impartially.

"Gather round me, my children," she commanded, as if it were possible to gather any closer than they already were, "and I will break the news. Dad's made a fortune, and is going to have a yacht, and a saw-mill, and I'm going West to grow up with the country!"

The message passed round, and all agreed that the Colonel was a wonder. Gloom fell upon the hearts of Arabella's admirers at her announcement that she would depart from Chattanooga in just one week. But Chattanooga rejoiced when next morning's newspaper announced in very glowing terms, rendered somewhat vague through lack of definite information, the success of Colonel Alonzo

Fairfax Hatch. No one cared how the Colonel had gained riches, and there was none to envy him, or to wish him anything but good luck, for in Chattanooga he was a veritable colonel of hearts. The journal found it, also, an excellent opportunity for a "cheer-up" editorial, which concluded thus:

"There is a lesson to be learned from the career of our distinguished fellow townsman, and that lesson is best given in his own familiar saying, that 'any gentleman, regardless of his years, may achieve financial success if he turns his attention to commercial pursuits.' Those are encouraging words, voiced by a brave and gallant gentleman, who practised, and proved, what he so aptly preached. Undaunted by those financial misfortunes that so nearly wrecked a fine old house, no longer young in years, and with scarcely anything save a spotlessly clean reputation, he turned his face Westward. That he has so quickly rehabilitated his purse proves that his campaign for wealth must have been as dashing as were his charges in those gloomy days when he fought for that which was to be a lost cause. The discouraging, although frequently misquoted, statement of a great scientist, that a man at forty-five years of life has passed the hey-day of accomplishment, or the goal-mark of hope for his declining years, is proven, in the case of Colonel Hatch at least, fallacious. There is no age-limit for men of his character. It is such as he, brave men, clean men, intelligent men, who are the beacon lights of our national life, and fortunate, indeed, is the community that has such an example to save others from the rocks of discouragement."

Arabella was proud of that editorial. She even cried a little with happiness when, for the third time, she read it. She carefully clipped it out, and preserved it. Burmah Jones would have kept it less secret; for he would immediately have rushed to a printing office to have it made into a neat and tasty circular. The Colonel would have read it about four times, then blushed, and torn it up, and reluctantly dismissed the subject had any one mentioned it to him.

But Chattanooga was not through paying honor to one of its finest old names. A Southern city is not a city in the Northern sense of the word; for the reason that cities of the South regard themselves as families; not mere collections of individual units bent on devouring one another. So, on the evening preceding her departure, Arabella was given a parting party such as is given to one of a family stepping out and away. Kirby, Little Billy, and Pick and Tommy, were there, each good-humoredly intent on filling her card with his own name and each, in turn, endeavoring to extract from her a promise of marriage. Moreover, the quartet accompanied her home, and each one fancied himself broken-hearted because she declined the honor of being wife to any young man with whom she had gone to school, although the young man might have family name, and be the prospective inheritor of sufficient means to enable him to idle away the remainder of "his natural born days."

Alone at last, in the home of a friend, where she was to pass the last night of her stay in Chattanooga, The moon slipped its rays softly through the gardens, and from her window she could look out and see the

towering hill, Lookout Mountain. At its feet the river wound softly, and on its heights the lights of the hotel glowed faintly. She faced the hill, wondering if there were any more majestic height than that in all the world. Up on its brink, she knew, stood the guns that her father had helped to defend back there in the tragic war. Across from it were the grounds where as a girl she had gone picnicking—and now, come to remember it, Billy and Pick, and Tommy and Kirby had nearly always been there on the same occasions. A spell of homesickness came over her, and vaguely she felt rather sorry that the United States was not polyandrous, so that she might marry them all. Presently, her thoughts drifted to her father, and remembering that he had made such a success, her mind leaped exultantly. At length, she slept the restful sleep of the young, and awoke drowsily, wondering if her departure for that far-distant land were not part of a dream. Resolutely she had refused to be sad.

At the railway station she found Uncle Jeff and Aunt Sally waiting for her, and Uncle Jeff had attired himself, as befitted a gentleman of the old school about to become a great traveler, in a silk hat that had once belonged to the Colonel, and a uniform of the Ancient Sons of Africa, resplendent with much braid. Several members of the Order were there to bid him good-by. Arabella rebelled at that gorgeous traveling costume, and, after smothering with laughter, explained to Uncle Jeff that the Order might not be in existence in the far West, and that, for the sake of its preservation his uniform should be exchanged for a more commonplace garb. Uncle Jeff

was not in the least abashed by this, and came closer to her, the sun reflecting on his blue and shiny bald head.

"Deedy, Ah understands dat, Missy Arabella," he whispered, hoarsely, "an' Ah's dun got mah odder clothes whar Ah can git 'em; but you see, Missy, Ah've been gran' Chief Sagamoah of de Ordah so long, Ah's expectin' a delegation of de brudders down heah to see me off."

He did not explain that for some days it had been an open secret to him that the Order proposed to make him a suitable gift, or that he cherished expectations that a king's ovation would be as a side show compared with the "send off" the members would give him. So Arabella went to the other end of the platform, and bade farewell to her own friends, who gave her flowers and candies, and solicitous advice. The quartet was there, and acted as porters to carry these offerings to her state-room, each of its members exhibiting a calm fortitude and a firm resolve to "tote" the major part of the contributions.

There came a final clash of noise, and everything else was drowned in the discordant clamor of a very blaring band that marched out upon the platform. Wondering, those within seeing distance stared. The Ancient Sons of Africa had arrived. Every one had to know it. A very proud drum-major led the way, flourishing a magnificent home-made baton. Trombones, blown by dusky brothers whose cheeks puffed, and who rolled their eyes sidewise, cracked and spluttered as each man endeavored to add arpeggios to the music; an immense darkey threatened to split the head of an immense base drum; a cornetist who had once played with a minstrel show, and who now

wore a cap with "Director" shining on its braid, nearly killed himself trying to catch a high note on an E-flat cornet. The station rocked with noise. Behind the band came a procession of dusky brothers, in the van of which walked the gift committee, and in front of all, shrouded in an immense dignity, stood Uncle Jeff.

From the steps of the Pullman coach, Arabella could see that he was being presented with a huge silver-plated water-pitcher, together with what looked like an old hotel tray, burnished for the offering. She also knew that Uncle Jeff's speech was interrupted by the train-men, who rudely insisted that the train was obliged to depart on time. She saw that Uncle Jeff, with Aunt Sally, and the water-pitcher and tray, was being hustled aboard, she heard the band strike up again, her own friends bade her farewell, the bell on the locomotive clanged in with the chorus, the wheels moved, and her journey had begun its first stage of a progress not unlike the long film-reel of a six-day moving picture. She turned back, somewhat tearfully, and bumped into a young man who was struggling to don a linen duster. Something about his back was familiar. He turned toward her, and grinned. Little Billy looked down at her.

"For heaven's sake! Billy! Where are you going?" she demanded. "I thought I missed you just before we left."

"Me?" grinned little Billy. "I'm going to Seattle to practise law. Got to start sometime, you know. Think I fooled the other fellows. Kept mum as a clapperless bell!"

"Well, what in the dev—!" a voice sounded behind

them; and together they turned to see who had uttered the exclamation. And there stood two other young gentlemen, each attired in a linen duster, and these two were staring at each other. Pick and Tommy! Little Billy's face grew black, and he rushed toward them.

"Say," he demanded, "where do you fellows think you're going?"

They turned toward him, frowning, and then, at sight of Arabella, grinned amiably.

"Seattle!" they declared in unison, and resolutely. They, too, had secretly decided upon Seattle.

"Well, of all things!" exclaimed Arabella, scarcely knowing whether to be amused or annoyed, while the three rivals eyed one another, and the other passengers in the car, settling their belongings, gaped at them. "Isn't that splendid!"

The humor of the situation dawned on the trio, and they laughed together, and agreed that it might be worse—each one, however, disappointed that the others were there.

"Well, anyhow," cheerfully announced Little Billy in his big bass growl, "we've got rid of Kirby! That's something to be thankful for."

They turned to escort her to her state-room at the rear of the car when a porter came toward them, talking volubly.

"Yas, Sah! De cawnductor don' told me you c'd change to numbah foah. Heah it am, Sah!"

The porter swung a suit-case deftly under the seat of section four, and, as he bent over, exposed behind him another young gentleman in a linen duster.

"Of course, you're going to sneak away from Chattanooga to Seattle to practise law!" a scornful

chorus of voices declared, as the three others of Arabella's admirers pounced down on him. "Don't tell us you aren't! It would hurt our feelings!"

Kirby shielded his head and face with his hands as they advanced on him, and backed until he threatened to smash the window.

"Well, why shouldn't I?" he demanded, savagely. "Anybody going to stop me? What are you all doing here?"

"Going to practise law in Seattle," they chanted, and then, finding a tune that fitted it, repeated it in a sing-song drone of dirge-like quality.

Arabella escaped to the seclusion of her state-room where she slammed the door, and sat down and wondered whether she should cry with vexation, or laugh with enjoyment, because she was to have such able protectors for the forthcoming tedious journey. She decided to laugh.

And, even at that moment, Uncle Jeff, put on the coach forward, which he would be compelled to occupy until later in the evening when he could have his berth in the sleeper, was doffing his regimentals to replace them with what he fancied would be a suitable costume for the wild and woolly West. He also stared apprehensively at a huge hammerless gun, which he had bought from a dealer in second-hand goods, who had guaranteed it not to shoot, but to frighten any one who looked at it, and especially Red Indians. Aunt Sally, in the meantime, was doing the best job of weeping that had been done on that train since it shook the dust of Chattanooga from its wheels. So, in this fashion, Arabella started Westward.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE THE KNAVE LAYS PLANS.

Burmah Jones, rather pleased by the prospects, and having a free hand, used it. His campaign was simplicity itself. He merely notified the big morning newspaper, on his return from Squaw Point, that he had a story for a good man, met the good man graciously, took him out and fed him on crab flakes and champagne, and then confided to him the great secret.

"It's not what I intended to tell you, young man," said Burmah, confidentially; "but I just can't help giving you a good story. It may be a disappointment to Seattle, but that part I'm sorry for. This is it!"

He leaned farther across the table and said:

"The A. and O. Railway Directors are all friends of mine. I don't want to be quoted in this, but you can be safe in saying that you have the story from what you newspaper men call a reliable source. The A. and O. has got the financial end of its game straightened out, and it's got all the money it needs. See? Well, it's going ahead, right this minute, with the preliminary surveys, and its line is just about as close to mapped out as is possible for anything to be. And you can't guess where she is goin' to hit tidewater? Squaw Point! Look it up in your maps, and you'll find that's an ideal bay for big steamers, and it's fifty-three miles nearer the mouth of Puget Sound. The A. and O.'s a-goin' to make that place up

there the biggest thing in the way of a hummer town that's ever been started. There's a man more or less connected with 'em up there right at this moment. Now, the reason I don't want you to quote me is that it might cost me some fat commissions, because I've handled real estate for a heap of railroads in my time.

"And I'm trustin' to your confidence this much, just because I like you, and want you to have a real good story. Ain't that all right?"

The reporter asked a few shrewd questions, but, influenced by the frankness of Mr. Jones, was half-convinced that the story might be true. If true, it was, indeed, big news. He made a hasty departure, and headed for his city editor's office. That astute and sceptical gentleman repaired to the telegraph-room, consulted with the telegraph-editor, then wired a Fargo newspaper to know if there was anything to corroborate the report. Back came the reply that the Fargo paper would on the following morning print a statement that the A. & O. had again resumed activity, because that very afternoon three distinct surveying parties had begun work. Further, the paper was credibly informed that the road would be rushed forward to become a great Transcontinental line, and that Fargo stood the best chance of becoming the division headquarters for the line, which meant that Fargo would be the site for large machine and construction shops.

In the local room of the great Seattle daily, where news had been dull and leading events scarce in the day's gleanings, Burmah's announcement was hailed with delight. It was "played up," and featured. It

was used as subject for an editorial headed, "Boost for Seattle!" and, in this, the citizens and the Chamber of Commerce were called upon to exert themselves to see that the terminal on the Pacific Coast should be no other city than Seattle itself.

The pot of Burmah Jones was bubbling when he sat in his pajamas on the following morning, and with rare delight read the columns devoted to his story. His guile had worked better than he had dared to hope. There faced him his free advertising, in pure reading matter!

"It's ten chances to one," he said to himself, "that none of the railway Directors will take the trouble to deny it until the rumpus kicked up is a lot bigger than now. And, by the time they get ready to say to Mister Chamber of Commerce, 'We don't know nothin' about any Squaw Point and never heard of it,' William Burmah Jones will have his, and be on his merry little way, and the Colonel, unless he's too big a fool, will have got mor'n his five thousand back, and be pattin' himself on the left shoulder-blade because he's learned how easy it is for a gentleman to make money from commercial pursuits! By Gad, Sir!"

In the course of the day, Burmah permitted himself to be interviewed by two evening newspapers, and adroitly intimated that, while he was nothing but an employee, there might be a story coming within a day or two from Squaw Point. His rôle was now that of an extremely busy and reticent man. He had set the stage for the reporters by taking a suite of rooms at a more pretentious hotel, and, when they interviewed him, they found him dictating letters to a stenographer. Needless to say, he had not ex-

plained that she was hired for just one week, and that the letters he wrote were carefully signed, sealed, and, after the girl's departure, just as carefully destroyed. If all the magnates to whom these letters were addressed in such friendly, confidential terms, had received them, there would have been more surprised millionaires in the United States than had ever before been jarred by crank letters. Burmah had shrewdly calculated that his stenographer might be impressed, and do some confidential talking. And his judgment was not at fault, for never before had she worked for a man who addressed Rockefeller as, "Dear Old John," Vanderbilt as, "Dear Bill," and Morgan as, "My old friend, Pierp!"

Surely, such a man knew whereof he spoke, and fraternized with the great.

Eagerly Burmah waited for the Colonel to return; but the Colonel, carried away by the artistic endeavor and poetic fluency of Hubbard, passed another day on Squaw Point. On the second night, alone in his room, in his shirt-sleeves, with his sparse gray hair ruffled, and collarless, Burmah worked over newspaper advertisements. Veteran campaigner that he was, the seductive, flamboyant copy grew beneath his hands. This was to be the golden opportunity. A dollar invested now, would quadruple itself within three months. It was a certainty that Squaw Point would be the terminus! It was fifty-three miles nearer the open Pacific than any other available city on Puget Sound, and had the finest harbor facilities in the world.

"Sheltered from the wind and the waves, it is the ideal retreat for the tired ships of the sea," his copy

read. "A battle-ship could anchor in its quiet depths, secure from storm and stress, and the leviathans of the Transatlantic trade could dock at its teeming wharves."

He told of the generosity of the great Transcontinental line in permitting the public to profit by this real-estate purchase, and so adroitly did he word his matter that the renowned A. and O. itself could find no legitimate reason to put a stop to his use of its name. He reveled in adjectives, and intoxicated himself with hyperbole, sitting there bent over his huge pieces of writing paper. He chewed the butts of pencils to splinters, and wore out erasers, adjusting his display print. Past master of fake sales, appreciating the tremendous power of advertising, he was like an old war-horse scenting the battle at hand. This was to be his supreme effort, this boom that must reach a climax, render profits, and permit him to depart within a few days. A week or two, at the most, he calculated, would be the ultimate limit, and this required quick work, even for a man who had the gift of getting other persons' money for nothing.

"Everything has got to be put over with a punch," he said to himself, when, tired and anxious, he went to bed. "I'll try to save the Colonel his five thousand; but that long-haired Hubbard guy will have to look out for himself. He don't look as if he'd starve to death, anyhow, so long as there are hen-roosts!"

He was at the dock to meet the Colonel and the engineer when they returned, and to hurry them to his rooms. Convinced that the time had come when he would have to depend on diplomacy, he

adopted the rôle of listener, silent and attentive, when Hubbard, over the dinner, expatiated upon his far-reaching plans, and the Colonel glowed approval. He let the engineer run his course, then dismissed him with the injunction that the plats for the main street of Squaw Point must be finished by the next evening, even if he had to work without sleeping or eating in the interim. Hubbard departed, and Burmah found himself alone with the Colonel, who walked up and down the room lauding the beauties of wonderful Squaw Point.

"Arabella's going to be the happiest girl on earth," he said. "When she sees how successful her father's been, how there's a glorious city springing up, and how everything's all right again, she'll just naturally put her arms round her old Dad's neck, and say, 'I told them you'd do it! I told them all the time!' Yes, Sir, Mr. Jones, we've got this thing right by the horns! I've always insisted, Sir, that a gentleman, should he but——"

Burmah Jones, wily but impatient, decided that this was the time to strike.

"By the way, Colonel," he interrupted, "I believe it's understood that me and you's to share on this first sale, ain't it?"

The Colonel stopped and looked at him with an aggrieved air, and Burmah feared that he had advanced his demand too abruptly.

"Share? Share, Sir? I'm a Hatch, Sir. No man ever did a Hatch a favor who was not requited. Of course I thought that was all understood."

Plainly, he was wounded by a suggestion that he,

a Hatch, might forget a friend. Burmah was on his feet, and had the Colonel's hand in an instant.

"My dear Colonel," he expostulated, "you didn't understand me. Certainly I understood that I was to share in your great success; but what I thought of, was how we were to arrive at the most equitable method of division. Here! Suppose we sell some lots to get people interested in this new and future great city, and that you and I alternately take the proceeds from alternate lots in the first sale. Could anything be fairer than that?"

"Why, Lord bless me, Sir!" promptly replied the Colonel, with his customary liberality. "I couldn't have thought of anything better than that. In fact, Sir, I was on the very eve of suggesting the plan, myself."

And Burmah sat down, debating whether it would be necessary for him to have the agreement in writing, and decided that it wouldn't. The thing to do now was to use the Colonel and Hubbard to the utmost as advertising possibilities. Hubbard would prove easy; but the Colonel, he decided, might prove troublesome. A brilliant idea invaded his mind. Why not follow out his tried and approved method of letting the Colonel think he was doing it all, and "turn him loose"? He began by joining that delightful old dreamer in plans for this wonderful city-to-be, and then said:

"Of course, Colonel, neither me nor you are hogs. We want other folks to share this with us, don't we?"

"Of course, Sir! Of course! There is profit enough in this coming metropolis of the North-west

to enable many a man, Sir, to repair his battered fortunes."

"Then," said Burmah, thoughtfully, "the quicker they get action on this battered-fortune business, the better it'll be for 'em. I think we ought to do some advertising."

The Colonel, previous to his trip to Squaw Point, had always regarded advertising with abhorrence; but, while *en route* to that land of promise, the far-sighted Burmah had surreptitiously slipped into the Colonel's pocket a few copies of booklets issued by advertising agencies, wherein it was plainly told that none but the advertiser could be considered honest, up-to-date, or worth while. And, as the Kansan had hoped, this seed had borne fruit.

The Colonel now leaned back in his chair, with an air of profound wisdom, and, much to Burmah's enjoyment, quoted, almost word for word, some of the advanced-thought ideas from that stack of literature.

"The modern highway to success," he said, "is paved with advertisement. The road to failure is lined with wrecks of those who never learned the value of printer's ink."

"By heck, Colonel," Burmah burst out enthusiastically, "you are a wonder. I never could have thought of that in this world. It's a positive education to be associated with a man of red-hot business ideas, such as you've got! Will you write some of those thrillers up?"

The poor old Colonel suddenly wilted over his chair. He had never written an advertisement in his

life. He had seldom read one. Burmah came to his relief.

"But that's sort of mean for me to let you do all the work, Colonel, while I'm doin' nothin' but sit around and let you get the ideas, furnish the money, and make money for me! I'll try to write those ads."

The Colonel beamed on him.

"I beg of you, Sir, not to feel that way about it," he insisted. "It is true," he continued, modestly, "that I have devoted considerable time, study and research to modern business methods; but I have had great opportunities, Mister Jones. Providence has been very kind to me and mine. I think, just to let you gain experience, I will let you try to write some of those advertisements. You are a much younger man than I, and should have your chance. I'll give it to you. Yes, Sir, you shall have your chance!"

"Thank you, Colonel," said the grateful Burmah Jones. "Now, about gettin' the folks up there after the ads are out? Did I hear you mention takin' a steamer to carry fellers up there free of expense, and then sellin' the first lots at auction?"

The Colonel's mouth hung open, and he gasped at the audacity of this campaign. He had never thought or heard of such a bold enterprise; he wondered what it would cost to charter a steamer. But Burmah gave him no time to object.

"That was a brilliant idea of yours, Colonel," he went on, with fervent heartiness. "You were quite right. All that is necessary to start that beautiful city into active creation, is to show the

place to the people. The auction sale proves that you are in earnest. It's like handin' 'em money on a silver-plated platter. They'll jump at the chance! They'll buy lots, and we'll explain to 'em that we want 'em to build on 'em, although of course it would be against the sacred constitution of the United States, guaranteein' liberty to all, to make 'em do it. They'll build fast enough, anyhow. Who could help it? Why, it's goin' to be the swellest town on earth. A man would almost go out and commit murder to get the money to build a house on that magnificent headland. Yes, Siree! That was a great idea of yours, Colonel! Positively great!"

"It comes from patient thought, Sir," said the Colonel, modestly. "I've had to think of a great many things in my time; but," he concluded as an afterthought, voicing his great homesickness, "Arabella's been a very wise counsellor to me, Sir. She's a wonderful child."

His mind reverted to Arabella, with her hair waving as she played tennis, or her lissome body, wonderfully rounded, bending over her saddle as her horse vaulted the old "stake-and-ridered" fences up in the Tennessee hills; the dance of her eyes at some particularly reckless feat accomplished; the laugh, like a wonderful golden bell, when he reproached her for some girlish prank; the assumed meekness, when he chided her for some extravagance of expenditure; the warm and tender kiss on his cheek; the loving strength of her arms around his neck that stifled every attempt at sternness.

"And another thing, Colonel," the voice of Burmah, studiedly careless, interrupted his reverie. "I

forgot to tell you, that somebody has leaked about Squaw Point bein' the prospective terminus for the A. and O. They talked to me some about it, and I told 'em that I couldn't say much, but that you were up there with Hubbard, and that maybe you'd tell 'em what kind of a city you are going to build on that splendid patch of ground. I knew you wouldn't mind. I'll telephone the newspaper man to come up."

For an instant, the Colonel threatened panic. He looked wildly about the room, as if seeking an excuse to escape; but Burmah had already stepped to the telephone, and called the city editor of the big morning paper. With the receiver in one hand and the other one fatly shutting off the transmitter, he talked to the Colonel while awaiting an answer, talked persistently as if to avoid interference.

"All you have to do, Colonel, is to be close. Let them do the guessing about the A. and O. Me and you can't betray confidence. So do most of your talkin' about what a wonderful harbor that is, and what a 'City Beautiful' this feller Hubbard is a-goin' to make."

He turned to the telephone, and explained that Colonel Alonzo Hatch was at the hotel, having returned from Squaw Point, and that he thought it might be of interest to their readers to hear what the Colonel had to say. Then he hung up the receiver briskly.

"They'll have a man here in five minutes," he said. "And, now, Colonel, don't knock the A. and O. Just look mysterious whenever this feller asks you anything about it."

He sat and rapidly advised the bewildered old veteran, coaching him indirectly for the forthcoming interview, until the reporter arrived, after which he made the introductions, and assumed the air of a mere underling, a respectful and meek employee of a great man, while the Colonel, warming to his own dreams, expatiated on the magnificence of that city which as yet existed only in his and Hubbard's minds. It stretched out into a fairy place, with towers, flower-bordered streets, beauteous parks, prosperous shipping and an orderly community. It was to be a city of good will and brotherly love. It was to have the most modern improvements, and to be the most sanitary place on the globe. There were to be no old men in it, because no one could ever die within its limits. Besides, persons would not wish to die when they were so well acquainted and happy in Squaw Point, heaven having lost its attractions.

The reporter wondered whether he was in contact with a poet, a madman, or a marvelous realty agent. And, always, when the interviewer referred to the A. & O., the Colonel insisted that he had nothing to say about the future plans of the great Transcontinental line, which more than ever gave the impression that this old man was wise, and knew all about it, yet too acutely cautious and reserved to say anything. His very denial that he knew anyone connected with the A. & O. gave color to the belief that he knew all about it. His very ingenuousness and frankness, caused conviction that he was concealing a vast number of cards in his sleeve.

The interviewer left with many notes, and at the very door was told, incidentally by the Kansan, that

Mr. Hubbard could be found at such-and-such a place, he thought, but wasn't quite certain. So the reporter hastened to the Hubbard abode, exactly as Burmah Jones had anticipated, to find that young enthusiast working his head off over drawings and plats, and unable to tell anything save that he had been given *carte blanche* to plan for Squaw Point the most beautiful and model city in existence, the embodiment of the Hubbard idea; that his clients appeared to have money to burn; that great wharves were proposed; that the Colonel was a most wonderful old gentleman; and that outlay, in this marvelous enterprise, was to be merely a secondary consideration.

All of which was news—if not entirely convincing.

CHAPTER VII.

TO ROB THE TRUSTFUL.

Two days later, the Colonel walked proudly up and down the beach of Squaw Point, and saw two rough timber-men, assisted by Hank and Flay, the latter looking as dilapidated as ever, hurriedly spiking the last of the poles for a primitive pier. It was a necessity that the Colonel, intent on philosophizing over the manner in which gentlemen make money, had overlooked; but Burmah Jones had thought of it. Also, after one brief day in Seattle, Burmah Jones had shipped the Colonel and Hubbard, together with the two timber-men, some cots, a tent, and a few other accessories, to Squaw Point.

"Hubbard's all right for just about one day where the anheuser bush grows," he had said to himself, "and the Colonel's going to talk too much if he's where they can get at him. Besides, the old feller might kick if he knew what I'm going to do to this town of Seattle."

And, doubtless, he spoke the truth; for within two days Seattle was bill-boarded with glaring lies concerning Squaw Point, the newspapers had full advertisements, mysterious interviews were being published, the Chamber of Commerce was beginning to act, and, through the aid of an old and trusted accomplice in New York, William Burmah had sent a number of telegrams to the Seattle papers, signed by various men supposed to be directors of banks and other financial institutions. Usually these asked for

information relative to Squaw Point, and sometimes they explained that it was rumored on the Street that this was to be the terminus of a great Transcontinental railway. Burmah himself was as inconstant and lively in his movements as a certain insect pest that hops. Only, his hop consisted of a lively waddle, albeit his sting was just as sure.

But, on this morning, the Colonel, in a flutter of excitement, watched the laying of the last pole for a landing-place at Squaw Point, and spoke, between times, to Lester, the calm, humorous-eyed young athlete, who wanted a rest, and seemed to have nothing in the world to do save fish and hunt.

"Mister Lester, Sir," the Colonel was saying, at the minute the last spike was being driven, "I've given you much of my confidence, as a kindred spirit, and as a much older man speaking to a younger one. It's the easiest matter in the world for a gentleman to achieve financial success. It requires nothing more than thought and industry, Sir. The human mind is so constituted that it must specialize. That is the secret, my young friend. Specialize! Look at me, Sir. Before I started out to make my fortune, I specialized. I read, I studied finance. I learned how other masters of finance had conducted themselves, Sir. It is to that preparation I owe my success!

"'Lives of great men all remind us, we can make our lives sublime,
"'And, departing, leave behind us footprints in the sands of time.'"

He quoted in his mellifluous voice, standing there with one hand on his heart, and his eyes upraised, and at the "Footprints in the sands of time," he opened his graceful fingers, and looked down at the beach, and seemed writing footprints with them, much to Lester's quiet amusement.

"As soon," said the Colonel, "as my charming daughter, Miss Arabella, arrives with our modest possessions, including my library, I shall take pleasure, Mister Lester, in lending you some of those masterpieces regarding finance, provided that you are at all thinking of specializing in that line."

"I should be delighted, Colonel Hatch," drily assented Lester, who, in so far as any one could see, had no idea of ever doing more than such dawdling as the means of a very modest man might permit. "But about this city, Colonel, do I understand that to-day is the great day when the excursionists are to come?"

"To-day is the day," solemnly asserted the Colonel.

Even as he spoke, they heard, in the distance, the sound of a steamer's whistle, and the subdued puffing of her exhaust. The Colonel was transfixed with excitement, as he strained his eyes looking down the long, broad, placid reach of one of the most beautiful spots in the world. Everything seemed waiting —the hills, the forests that projected out to the water's edge in friendly solicitude, the indented banks, the whole glorious panorama, just waiting for this, the actual starting of Squaw Point. A smudge appeared around a long point of land, forest-clad, which concealed the next stretch of the

sound. The exhaust was plainer now. It steadily increased in volume. Suddenly, around the curving point, a half-mile distant, the bow of a white sound steamer shoved itself, enlarged, and, gay with bunting and flags and signs, headed into the placid bay. A cracked and wheezy brass band suddenly broke itself into pieces playing, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," and the watchers saw that the boat's decks were black with folk who had taken advantage of this unprecedented opportunity for a free ride and pleasant outing. Standing stodgily on the steamer's bridge beside the captain, was the unmistakable figure of Burmah Jones, this time with his silk hat on the extreme rear of his head. He smoked a full-length cigar, and, as the boat approached, the Colonel observed, with much approval, that Burmah had donned a frock-coat for the occasion. The boat came to the extemporized landing, and, as the Colonel rushed down to meet it, he was nearly knocked from his feet by a bundle thrown ashore. The gang-plank did not come out immediately, but two or three men leaped the intervening space, and began receiving other packages and mysterious boxes. These bundles were seized upon and carried away, and the Colonel was informed that this group of men were professional clam-bakers, who had been hired to go up to the top of the hill, and there make a spread.

"Most amazing!" said the Colonel. "Most amazing, what my friend Jones does think up!"

But he had small time for reflection, for now the gang-plank was out, and down it poured a laughing,

elated crowd of excursionists. Burmah Jones from his vantage point watched them speculatively, much as a nice fat lion might watch a flock of lambs, good-naturedly marking and selecting those he proposed to devour. At length he disembarked, carrying a bundle under his arm. He accepted the Colonel's hand and congratulations.

"Some of them, Sir, look like representative citizens," crooned the Colonel.

"And the rest like a bunch of yeggmen," added Burmah. But he failed to state to the Colonel that, for a small stipend, this same bunch of yeggmen, properly trained, were to be the "Boosters" for the bidding, and that he had worked with them over night, teaching them "stop and start" signals. He was a thorough believer in organization.

"Where's Hubbard?" he demanded, tersely.

The Colonel's face sobered, and he looked aggrieved.

"That young man, Sir, is wasting his time at this moment, making water-color sketches of what this city's to look like; and what's more, he says you told him to."

Burmah disarmed this resentment with a laugh.

"Sure I did!" he said, unblushingly. "You see, Colonel, folks like to know how it's possible for things to look. Besides, you see, it might look that way after all, if you just turn your mind to it. You don't suppose old Pullman laid out his town without some plans, do you? That great industrial city where they make the fancy cars? Why, I should

say not! I was sure that's just what you'd want Hubbard to do—make plans!"

"And so I did," unblushingly assented the Colonel, taking back tracks with agility. "The very minute he told me what he was doing, I let him alone. Of course, we have to have visible suggestions."

"Then," said Burmah, "I'd better go over to his tent, and see how he's comin' on."

And he hurried away, leaving the Colonel feeling as lonesome and helpless, for the moment, as it was possible to be. At the tent that had been made "Engineer's Headquarters," Burmah stopped, took off his coat, shouted, "Come out here, Hubbard," and unrolled his bundle. It proved to contain a big cloth banner, which, fifteen minutes later, was stretched on poles beside the tent, where any one could read, in red, "Engineer's Headquarters."

Burmah spared just one minute to look at the partially completed sketches, told Hubbard not to be so careful, and to "hustle them to a finish," and pattered off up the hillside. Already, under the shade of a clump of fine old trees, the clam-bakers were at work. A huge vat had been planted on stones. Into it had gone a heavy layer of clams, and now on top of this, the chef, in white apron and cap, was placing the white muslin sacks containing chickens and sweet potatoes, lobsters and sweet corn, while a man fed the fire beneath. At a little distance away, other adepts were adjusting collapsible tables, and making benches. Another man was sorting cutlery and plates, and still another heaped great loaves of bread on a table, preparatory

to slicing them. They worked, Burmah noted, with the quick perfection of experience and training, and he approved. The sounds of a hammer called him, and he hurried across to another part of the knoll, where men were making a platform, and he admonished them to haste. Two boys with bundles of flags under their arms were going over the surveyed ground, planting a red flag beside each stake, and in the center of each lot a placard bearing a number. Burmah sent one of them hurriedly down the hill to get a plat from Hubbard, and when the boy returned, mounted the half-constructed platform, and tacked up a huge, crude drawing, showing "Main Street." This was so large that it could be seen from many yards' distance. He climbed down from the platform, and ordered that each member of the little band should be given a bottle of claret, and thereby gained the musicians' approval. He stopped long enough to cut a staff for a decrepit old gentleman, who was wandering aimlessly around, and won that gentleman's regard. He laughed, joked, told stories, or discussed the weather, with different men he met. He was ubiquitous; he was entertaining. He radiated good will, and made friends of every man he met. He would have attempted back and fore somersaults if he had thought, for an instant, that they would have put any one in a good humor. He was the king of blandishments. Sweat streamed from his face, and his coat was on his arm, his collar wilted, a handkerchief thrust into his neckband, and his patent-leather shoes were white with mountain dust.

He sent a boy for the Colonel, also to Hubbard, with instructions to the latter that, finished or not, the sketch of the proposed city must be brought along. He repaired to a place where his own belongings had been stacked, and pulled out long cylindrical rolls, and scanned them while waiting for the cook's announcement. And it was Burmah Jones, indefatigable, who got the chef's signal that the meal was prepared, and then ordered the cornetist of the band to blow "Assembly" as a bugle call until all the excursionists were seated. He took no time to eat of that savory mess, but bustled around to see that the food was served, and that no man's glass should be left for an instant empty. Claret, the heaviest he had been able to buy, was to flow like water. "Warm 'em up!" might have been his motto.

And, at just the right moment, he assembled the band in front of the completed auctioneer's platform, and it wheezed gaily into that magic tune, "A Hot Time in the Old Town To-night," while he made the Colonel and Hubbard mount the rostrum and take chairs. His speech was a marvel of brevity, for he shrewdly calculated that the effects of that dreadful claret, mixed with hot clams, would wear away in less than an hour. The Colonel gasped when Burmah explained, audaciously, that the Atlantic and Oriental Railway wanted the good will of the people of the Pacific Coast, and knew that such friendliness could not be obtained by "hoggin' it all." That was why this group of representative citizens assembled on this glorious day were to have given

them the chance of a life-time. He called attention to the sketch made by the "Honorable" Frederick Hubbard, the world-renowned and unequaled exponent of the "City Beautiful," who, at an enormous expense, had been employed to make this the model city of the universe. Mr. Hubbard would now be introduced, and expound his theories of what made a "City Beautiful."

And Mr. Hubbard, who, after a long drought, had been led to the spring in the desert, ambled to the front of the stage, broke into words at this rare opportunity, and began to expound at the rate of a mile a minute. He was like a moving picture film, and Burmah the man who turned the crank; for, when the latter thought time enough had been used to make an impression, he chopped the film off, and jocosely interrupted.

The Colonel was introduced.

"Tell 'em all about Arabella and Lee, and how you want to make this place a credit to Chattanoogy, Colonel," whispered Burmah.

And the Colonel did! Burmah envied him that rare gift of simultaneously dreaming and vocalizing. He wondered how much the crowd would stand. He saw with delight that this fine, simple old man was a big drawing card, and let him go the limit.

"Out yonder, gentlemen," the Colonel was saying in his peroration' "will be the city park. Its grassy lawns shall be covered with little children, those flowers of God's garden, ornamenting and decorating its borders. 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' said the Greatest Being that ever lived in human

form. They shall come to this city of ours! It shall be a city of homes, where these little ones may grow up under the flag of our country, the most noble flag that waves over the land of a free people. Down below us great ships of the sea shall come in, dock at magnificent wharves, and take on the golden grain that has blossomed and ripened under heaven's kindly winds on the far-flung plains. Loaded with spices and myrrh, and strange perfumes from the East, they shall enter, bearing their fragrance to a great railway terminus, and, reloaded with the sweet-smelling grain, they shall depart hungrily, hoping to come back again and see the headland of Squaw Point rising up like a jewel in the crown of Puget Sound. There will be schoolhouses, and churches, and places of amusement, and stately dwellings, and paved streets, and electric lights shining through the calm and peaceful nights, where now you stand. Some years ago, gentlemen, I had no dreams of finance."

He paused impressively, and William Burmah behind him fidgeted a trifle, and cocked his ears forward.

"Old cuss is a-goin' too far," he thought. "He's about due for the bell."

"I found myself and my beautiful daughter, Miss Arabella Hatch, by reverses of fortune, reduced to poverty," the Colonel was going on in a trembling voice that betrayed a great hunger for sympathy, and a proud recountal of successes. I had always insisted that any gentleman, did he but turn his attention to commercial pursuits, could make money.

Now I'm asking you to take a chance with me. I don't know, of course, whether the Atlantic and Oriental is——"

He halted, for there came a violent jerk of his coat-tail, and, as he looked around to discover the cause, he saw Burmah Jones crowding in front of him. He was indignant, but helpless. He had mapped out in his mind one of those flowery periods such as had won him applause on many public occasions in that far-distant South, and down there nobody ever dared jerk his coat-tails. Bewildered, he subsided, even as Burmah Jones, in his incisive, raucous voice said:

"Gentlemen, my respected friend, Colonel Hatch, has told you but a part of it; but time is gettin' short, and we will now auction off a few of these lots. I ain't got time to even explain the plans for the new dépôt, or the round-house, or the first public school, or the library; but, so's you'll know we mean business, here they are!"

The Colonel staggered back into his chair and wiped his face with his handkerchief. He saw that from some unexpected place Burmah Jones had unrolled a lot of drawings, which he now hastily exhibited. Nor did he dream that from the front view they were so magnificent. Why should they not be, inasmuch as they were drawings borrowed from architect's offices under the pretext of examination, drawings that covered everything from competitive designs for a treasury building at Washington, a new wing for the Metropolitan Museum of New York, a study of the Metropolitan Tower, to a residence for

a newly made millionaire Senator from Montana? The Colonel wondered where Hubbard had got time to draw them, and poor Hubbard, author of the "City Beautiful," sustained equal curiosity. But, after being unrolled and displayed for the briefest time, they were again carefully rolled, and thrust back into the tin case.

"Can I look at those?" whispered Hubbard to Burmah.

"No, you can't," snapped Burmah in reply. "Let you see 'em later, maybe," and again he faced his audience. Well he knew that the psychological moment was coming. He seized a pointer and pointed at Lot number One, on Main Street, called attention to its merits of situation, lifted his hand to his cheek as if some wandering insect had annoyed him, and began. The hand to the cheek was the signal to the boosters, scattered here and there, to start the price good and high. They did. And up on the stand stood that Napoleonic little fat man, watching each bidder, calculating with lightning-like rapidity and absolute accuracy just how high he dared let the bidding go. Sweat streamed from him. First he doffed his coat, then his vest, and last of all slipped his suspenders down. The sweat continued relentlessly, until the gay silk shirt he wore was wet through, and his cherubic face began to show the strain. He was just selling the lots fronting, "On the magnificent public library which we propose to build here, Gentlemen, where you see it indicated on the map," when Lester, always deliberate, always imperturbable, arrived on the scene, heard men bidding

vociferously for the favored spot, and had to retire behind a tree to conceal his laughter.

"By Jove!" he said, addressing Skaggs, who with hands in pockets, and tired from a day's work under such a strenuous driver as Jones, leaned against the nearest tree, "it looks to me as if I'd missed quite a lot of fun."

"Fish bitin'?" Hank asked, without shifting his tired frame.

"Bully!"

"Wish I'd a-fished instead of takin' this job. Hang that-there little fat feller! He's a regular heller for work, he is."

"Looks like it," cheerfully grinned Lester, surveying the drenched appearance of the auctioneer. "He seemed rather disappointed because I didn't want to do a day's work for him. He offered me two dollars."

The last lot was being sold, and the bidding had reached a climax in that splendid mob fury which prevails where such a sale is a success. Many a man, carried away by that subtle current in the air, was bidding his last dollar. In a perfect frenzy, the lot was sold, and Burmah Jones climbed down, and went to the band, which at intervals had played while men were examining lots.

"Turn it loose," Burmah said.

It did, tearing to shreds that fine old anthem, "When a Reuben Comes to Town, He is Sure to be Done Brown." Burmah started to leave, and then, appearing to notice the Colonel for the first time since the sale began, wondered if he had not better

resort to diplomacy again. The Colonel might get into a dudgeon about something. Quick as a flash, his mind saw the way. He climbed to his perch, and waved his arms up and down at the band, bringing it to a scattering stop, the tuba and the clarionet being the last to yield.

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" shouted Burmah. "Just a moment more, please."

The crowd, which had begun to shift and move, halted to catch his words.

"We are all feller citizens now," said Burmah, genially taking them into his confidence and society. "We are goin' to make this a great city. The name of Squaw Point is inappropriate for what is to be the model city of the West. I suggest that we re-name it. I suggest that we name it in honor of that distinguished Southern gentleman who fought through the war with valor, and who discovered this beautiful spot. That peerless leader, who, like the Moses of old, led a bunch of Israelites to New York. Hold on—I mean the promised land. Let us call our city—Port Hatch!"

He gave a signal to the boosters, who, knowing that something was expected of them, started a wild cheer. Others, not caring a continental what name the embryo town had, joined in. The Colonel was on his feet, prouder than any king being called to a throne, smiling and trying to make himself heard. Burmah Jones with hands cupped to his mouth, was yelling to the leader of the band to play "Dixie," and that gentlemanly and tired Teuton misunderstood, and with his cornet to his lips and his cheeks distended, started, "See the Conquering Hero Comes," while

behind the tree Lester, the only man besides Jones to see the humor of the situation, doubled over with mirth.

Burmah stopped the band and the cheering, and the good-humored crowd wondered what was coming next. The Colonel, almost speechless with emotion, and dim-eyed, made them a deep bow.

"Gentlemen, and fellow citizens," he said, "from the bottom of my heart, I thank you for the high honor you have done us. There has never been a Hatch, my friends, who was not a gentleman. It is a proud name in that far land whence I came, with my loins girded up for the making of this, the greatest endeavor of my life."

He paused, as if something had clutched his heart. The laugh died on Lester's lips, and he saw that others around him were affected and wondering. Some cadence of the Colonel's voice, some underlying suggestion, not in words, revealed that he was telling the truth, and, also, that this was his great fight.

"I have a daughter, Men, back down there in what we who fought for it call God's land. She will be proud to know that her old father has been honored by having a new town named after him. And, standing here to thank you all, I give you my word, the unbreakable word of a gentleman and a Hatch, that I shall do all I can to make this town an honor to my family name!"

He sat down, and this time the band-master, exercising his own judgment, broke into the Marseillaise. To the Colonel, it was like a trumpet blaring the beginning of a battle. Proud, happy, homesick and

lonesome, he got up to follow the crowd toward the landing, and, as he did so, said:

"Lord! I wish Arabella could have been here!"

But Burmah Jones was scowling and frowning, and chewing a cigar again, that sign of mental unrest. He nearly forgot to instruct the Colonel and Hubbard what to do, until he saw them on the wharf.

"Hubbard," he said, tersely, "you stay here, and keep workin' until you hear from me, which may be within a couple of days. And you, Colonel, I think you had better come down to Seattle with me."

It did seem as if Burmah feared that some of those who had bought land might get an opportunity to talk with the Colonel, and that the Colonel might say something to upset things, for on the whole homeward trip, while men began to come to their senses, he "rode herd" over the Colonel, and kept him from saying much of anything to any one.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KNAVE PLUNGES DEEPER.

THE soul of William Burmah Jones was troubled for a strange reason—a most unusual reason for a soul that so rarely was troubled by anything like conscience. And that reason was due to his tactical blunder in naming Squaw Point, Port Hatch; for up to that time the Colonel had not been badly compromised. As it was, the Colonel had basked in delightful ignorance, and taken the whole affair seriously.

"He's such a foolish old feller," said Burmah to himself, walking up and down his room, preparatory to dining with the Colonel, "that, if I leave him alone here, they'll tear him to pieces when they get wise. They'll crucify him higher'n Ham-and. And I dassen't go to him, and tell him to beat it with me! Humph! The old cuss'd probably drag a hoss pistol out of his clothes somewhere, and fill me with lead. Him and his Arabella! Wish to the Highrasticutum of Swat I'd never heard of either of 'em, because—hang it all!—I like the old cuss!"

Later in the evening, it was hard to avoid the infection of the Colonel's great joy. It was hard to face his liberality. Never a word of complaint did he make when he learned that William Burmah Jones' share of the day's sales amounted to a little more than ten thousand dollars. He beamed on Burmah.

He patronized him. For the first time he called him Burmah, a certain sign that he had accepted him into his full confidence and warmest friendship.

"Burmah, my boy," he said, "you are a sure-enough able lieutenant and helper! You have assisted me throughout my enterprise in a most astounding manner, Sir. If you just stick by the colors, I'll lend you my financial judgment, and you, also, shall be rich. Most astounding, when you come to think of it, how nobly we've started this great work! I just sent a wire to Miss Arabella, urging her to come at once, and telling her I'd got a start for my fortune. It cost me 'most fourteen dollars. I knew she'd be right happy!"

He leaned back, and blew a cloud of smoke at the ceiling, and rolled his expensive cigar between his white old fingers, and stroked his goatee, and looked the picture of prosperity. Burmah scowled at him, knowing that another awkward and compromising step had been taken, the bringing of Arabella to the scene of trouble.

"Poor little kiddie!" he thought. "So she's run into it, too, eh? Maybe they'll only tar and feather Arabella!"

"And, by the way, Burmah, while you were gone, fixing-up for dinner," the Colonel said, "I arranged for a lumber- and brick- and coal-yard up there at Port Hatch."

Burmah "came to" with a jump, and wondered what other misfortune was due.

"There was a man whose brother bought three lots up there to-day. Maybe you recall him. Todd

was his name, tall, rather lean, not to say thin, man, who wore spectacles, and seemed a right-nice man. Just came West from Iowa, he told me, where he sold out a farm. Should make a good citizen, I take it, this Mister Todd."

"But about this brother of his?" insisted Burmah.

"His name is Todd, too. He's a nice man."

"Yes, Colonel, I see all that; but you haven't told me about this lumber business."

"Why, you see," said the Colonel, "he came to buy land for a lumber- and coal- and brick-yard. Said he couldn't lose any time, because he wanted to ship a stock up there to-morrow, so he could be on hand when they start to build. He was such a fine sort of a man that I could see what a fine citizen he would make. Perfectly representative, Sir. So I just naturally gave him land for his yards, and a place for a wharf. He said he had to be located on tide water, so's his ships could unload. His brother is going to start a hardware store, right away, on one of those lots of his."

Burmah leaned back, and groaned.

"You gave this feller, Todd, enough of the water-front for a wharf and a lumber-yard, you say? For nothing? Why, Colonel, if he came to buy, why didn't you sell it to him? Why didn't you get his money? You can't make nothin' by givin' land away!"

"By Jingoes!" said the Colonel. "That's an idea I haven't given enough attention to yet! I didn't think about that at the time. He was such a nice man, this Mister Todd, that I sort of wanted him for a

neighbor. He's got four children, and he's a widower. He looked right sad, when he told me about losing his wife. And she's been dead eleven years."

"Are you sure," said Burmah, "that you didn't give him a lot up on the hill, too?"

"No, Sir," said the Colonel, cheerfully, "I didn't. I just mentioned that to him, and told him that, if he'd wait till we got our surveys extended, maybe he'd find a place up there that he'd like to have. But he couldn't wait. He wants to start right in."

Burmah was too tired to argue, too much annoyed to convince the Colonel of anything, if to do so required words. His voice was hoarse from his day's work, and his throat hurt, and he croaked instead of enunciated. He jerked his chair over to the table in the room, and began his accounting.

"Lot One brought three, fifty; and that's yours. Lot Two brought four hundred flat, and that's mine."

And so on, while the Colonel, delighted, listened and pretended keen attention and great business closeness. Burmah got up when his accounting was finished, and said, desperately:

"I'm tired, and I'm goin' home. But, Colonel, for God's sake don't give away the rest of it, and the money and the cheques I've just handed you before I can get here in the mornin'. Don't give away any more land!"

With which emphatic, despairing injunction, he clapped his silk hat on his head, and hurried away. Tired as he was, he did not go to sleep when he reached the sumptuous apartment he had taken in the hotel. He walked up and down, chewing his

cigar, and pausing now and then to kick the waste-basket beside the stenographer's desk, as if such physical action were a safety-valve for his perturbation. He could not conceive of such a man as the Colonel.

"Why, if any one had told me about him a month ago," he said to himself, savagely, "I'd have thought the man was a liar, or just out of a booze sanatorium. I can't hold on, and I can't let go! If I told the Colonel it was all a bunk, he'd first kill me, and then distribute that money back where it came from while waitin' in his cell for trial. If I don't tell him, he's goin' right ahead to make an ass of himself."

Carefully he went over all the statements he had issued, all the excitement he had worked up, and, also, what chances for himself there were if he continued with the game.

"The A. and O. ain't denied nothin' yet," he thought, "and they've had time. Probably they don't pay no attention to such things. Maybe they ain't even thinkin' of coming to the Coast. Maybe it's nothing but a plain stock-jobbin' deal to sell bonds, or somethin', and all this helps 'em."

He paused directly in front of the mirror with his eyes widely opened, and his lips set grimly.

"By Gad! That's it!" he declared. "Why not? I can take a chance! The Colonel would give me a whole subdivision, if I asked him for it. This fool, Todd, or whatever his name is, is goin' to ship some lumber and brick and stuff up there, and his brother, that scraggly-necked farmer, is a-goin' to open a hardware store. It'll make it look more than ever

like the real goods. Some of those suckers may start to build a house or two. Besides, there'll be a steamboat service, that's a cinch, and I can get away pretty fast and over to Canada, if it blows up! I'll take a chance."

In all his crooked, stormy career, he had never lacked decision, and now that characteristic stood him in good stead. He tumbled into bed, and, in less than five minutes after the lights went dark in the gorgeous apartment, was sleeping that fine, steady, undisturbed sleep which is supposed to come from a guiltless conscience. And so soundly did he sleep, and so tired was he, that he sat up in bed thinking it still early in the night, when, in the morning, the Colonel rapped on his door, having insisted on "going right up."

"Well, well, well!" exclaimed the Colonel, beaming at him as he rubbed his sleepy eyes and hitched his pajamas closer. "Look at the ant, thou sluggard! I've been up 'most three hours, Burmah, and have done a whole heap of business."

That brought the schemer to wakefulness in an instant.

"Yes, Sir," the Colonel went on, highly elated with himself, "I took the advice of Mister Smiles, who, in his most excellent work, says that financial success comes to those who get up early enough. I got up at five o'clock this morning, at six-thirty my breakfast was over, and I was reading the big account of the establishment of Port Hatch. At seven I was down to a contracting office I had observed but a few days ago, arranging for having them come up and

grade Main Street. Very liberal men they are, Sir. Very liberal, indeed! They're going to put in a graded road from the wharves right up the hill, too, and fix it so's they can lay the pavements as soon as we can—er—show them some additional security for their work. I paid them five thousand dollars down so there would be no delay. They're to send me contracts this morning."

"They are, eh?" said Burmah, hopelessly. "And you paid them five thousand down before the contracts were drawn, eh?"

And, to the Colonel's surprise, he got up and clutched his thatch of gray hair with both hands, walked across to kick the unoffending waste-basket with has bare foot, then used profanity as he hopped around the room on one leg, holding his injured big toe in his fat hand. This exercise seemed to steady him. He slipped into a big dressing-gown, and grimly sat down by his desk.

"Colonel," he said, bluntly, "friendship's friendship, and business is business. I can help you build up Port Hatch, and you can help me. I want you to deed me two blocks of that water-front, and four blocks of the extension on Main Street. It's to be mine. I can't—"

He stopped; for there was such a hurt look on the Colonel's face that even he, hardened as he was, could not endure it and continue unrelenting.

"Burmah," said the Colonel, "it ain't what you say, but the way you say it, that sounds mighty unkind. Gentlemen, as you know, even though they are in financial pursuits, don't quibble over trifles.

You asked for four blocks on Main Street Extension. I'm going to give you six. You asked for two blocks of water-front. I'll give you four. There's enough for both Miss Arabella and me. Personally, I work for her interests. Publicly, I work for the promotion and up-lift of the forthcoming city, which bears my name, which has honored me by calling itself Port Hatch! And I don't like to feel, Burmah, that you-all—"

"Why, Colonel, you ain't sore, are you? I didn't mean it that way. No, Siree. Rather than make you offended, I'd cut off my right leg. Yes, Sir! Chop her right off!"

Burmah held up a chubby leg, the roundness of which was not concealed by his pajamas. And the truth of the matter was that he was actually touched by this generosity. It brought back something fine from his youth, when he, too, had been generous, before greed and conquest had made him the half-blackleg he was, the sharper, the schemer, the heartless trafficker in anything that would bring returns.

"I was about to suggest, Colonel," he said, quickly shifting away from dangerous ground, "that we should have an office, or offices, down in the business section of Seattle; that we should open them to-day, if possible. There is goin' to be a rush for Port Hatch lands. Port Hatch must have a local headquarters."

"Just what I was thinking of," asserted the Colonel, helping himself to one of Burmah's cigars. "I was about to say that to you, Sir. We'll do that the first thing. I'll pay for fitting them up. Now,

about rugs. I've always leaned toward those old Persian things. Red's the best for offices, though. Maybe the second office ought to have green. Wish I'd thought to ask Mister Hubbard about that. Great thing to be an artist, Sir!"

And thus, while Burmah Jones shaved, bathed, and dressed, the Colonel ambled, sometimes vocally, sometimes mentally, onward, devoted for the moment to establishing offices for a town that had no buildings, and a real-estate concern that was not incorporated, and a business firm that was not formed.

Celerity was a habit with Burmah Jones, when wearing his war-paint, and inasmuch as the Colonel had so kindly volunteered to pay for the equipment of the new offices, and wished to have them fitted artistically, he willingly conceded this point. As a result, by sunset of that day, the Port Hatch Land Company had become a reality so far as outward appearances went. Burmah admitted to himself that he could see no reason in the world why the Colonel insisted on buying a rug of dull green, when it would have been possible, for half the price, to get a very gorgeous one with a yellow border, red center and purple fringe; but the Colonel paid, and that was vastly different from paying for it one's self. Also, he could not see why it was that the Colonel chose big, old, dull mahogany desks and chairs, when, for less money, they could have had a desk painted and striped like a zebra.

On the other hand, the Colonel failed to appreciate all the decorative instincts turned loose by Burmah. The Colonel had just hammered his thumb a

the new offices, when Burmah appeared with two boys behind him lugging huge bundles.

"Put 'em down there," indicated Burmah, and then, after they had gone, turned to the Colonel. "Got 'em!" he exclaimed. "Just what we want. Found 'em in a store bein' sold out by the Sheriff. That is, most of 'em. The rest I got down at Smith's."

The Colonel meditatively sucked his injured thumb, and stood above Burmah while the latter opened his bundles. First came a shock of Dakota wheat, cut green, and palpably dyed to an extraordinary golden hue. Next came a shock of Idaho oats. An enormous stand of Iowa corn-stalks with immense white and yellow ears wired thereon, a dozen monster Oregon apples, some California Bartlett pears, and some Florida lemons, completed the selection. The Colonel forgot his thumb, and gazed at the display on the floor.

"But pardon me, Sir," he queried, "if I ask what we are to do with all those things!"

"What to do with 'em? Put 'em in the window over there as soon as we pull the shades up, and have a nice sign painted to hang above 'em which reads, 'Port Hatch land the most fertile in the world. Look at these!' "

Burmah got up from his knees with an air of triumph; but the Colonel looked dubious.

"Don't you think—eh, that is, ain't you afraid that's sort of misrepresenting things?" the Colonel asked.

Burmah took off his hat and wiped his forehead.

He then twisted the large diamond ring on his finger, pursed his lips, and vented a sigh what sounded more like the exhaust from a river packet than a human being.

"But we don't exactly say they was grown up at Port Hatch, do we?" he objected.

"Don't see how the inference could be plainer," the Colonel replied.

And there was something so inflexibly honest in his attitude that Burmah decided to change front.

"That's the way real-estate men did in lots of places where I've been," he remarked, as if to himself; "but maybe it ain't exactly right, Colonel. I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll split the difference. You're right about our havin' no fruit up there yet, so we'll just put the grain in the window, with the sign. We'll eat the other stuff. Besides, it wouldn't keep long anyhow!"

Mentally, he consoled himself with the thought that he could have Hubbard make a lot of drawings, and fill the window in with pictures of buildings such as the "proposed Methodist Church at Port Hatch," and have the word "proposed" so small that it would take a reading glass to discover it. Outwardly, he was active with the pears, and by careful attention to business succeeded in eating four to the Colonel's one, for the Colonel had fallen to rhapsodizing on the excellence of the fruit, and now and then quoted poetry. He was in the midst of it when Burmah bit into the fifth.

"Pears, ripe and yellow, hanging from spreading
limbs;

"Pears that droop and falter, eager for craving hands;

"Pears that seem to welcome the—"

There was a rap at the door and a frowsy-headed messenger-boy, with a uniform that had evidently done much service for a much larger lad, opened it, and stared around.

"Any feller here by the name of Hatch?" he queried, nonchalantly.

The Colonel stopped quoting, and acquiesced.

"Message for you," the boy said, with admirable brevity, and delivered a yellow envelope and his book. The Colonel adjusted his glasses, signed the book, gave the boy a dime, and tore the envelope open.

"She's coming!" he exclaimed, jubilantly. "She's coming, Lord bless her! She'll be here to-morrow!"

Burmah had been looking at him as if transfixed, with a pear, half-eaten, in his hand; but, now, he was assailed with a dreadful surmise.

"Coming? Who's coming?" he asked.

"My daughter, Arabella," the Colonel almost shouted.

"Good Lord!" groaned Burmah Jones, as happily as if someone had just read a warrant for his arrest. "Comin', is she?" And then, to himself, he added: "I wish to the little fat Billikin of luck that I was goin'!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE DAUGHTER ARRIVES.

The train rattled into the station-shed, and in the very front rank of those who waited for it stood one very tall, thin man, with a mustache and goatee and an ebullient air, and one very short, fat man, with an expectant, downcast mien. The tall man almost dragged his smaller companion into danger's path as the train crashed to a standstill and an officer advised them to go slowly. A Pullman porter dropped off with his little carpeted step, so that the soles of the drummers' shoes might not get soiled before wading through the mud; a pompous gentleman with a small hand-bag descended, and then, with due speed, came the Tennessee contingent, led by Kirby, who carried some bags. After him came Tommy, with three or four lady's wraps, followed by Pick, with a hand-bag, and finally, Arabella herself, smiling, radiant, and so beautiful that every man on the platform stared at her, including one gentleman who, embracing his wife after a seemingly long absence, had to swing his spouse around so that he could see over her shoulder. The policeman edged closer, the station-master wiped off his glasses, and a baggage-man used the word "Please" in asking for gangway room for his truck.

And, as they came down the steps in procession, the Colonel, stricken dumb by the sight of so many home faces, embraced one after another, and repeated to each:

"Why, bless my soul!"

But, at sight of Arabella, he could no longer restrain himself, so crushed her in his arms, and kissed her on the forehead, the lips, the hair, the tip of her pretty ear, and her upturned throat, while she clung to him joyously, heedless of disarray. The Colonel released her, held her at arms' length and critically surveyed her from the depths of her candid, violet eyes to the points of her tiny, dainty shoes.

"Why, Arabella, you haven't changed a particle," he exclaimed, as if expecting that she would show gray hairs, after being separated from him for three or four weeks. "You look just like you used to, lassie!"

He paused, as he caught sight of something huge, like a trained bear in a linen duster, lumbering down the steps, and carrying a heap of wilted flowers. It was Little Billy bringing up the rear. The Colonel dropped back to his, "Why, bless my soul!" and rushed to Billy, who promptly shoved the flowers on him. The Colonel accepted them much as he would have a bale of hay, and appeared puzzled, and half-inclined to drop them on the platform.

"What—what's this mess?" he began.

"Flowers, Dad! Just flowers! Flowers from Tennessee that I saved for you," exclaimed his daughter.

He suddenly buried his face in the wilted petals and inhaled deeply. The very hold of his hands changed from reluctance to reverence. As if the blossoms were alive and tender, he clutched them a little closer to his breast, and they saw that his eyes were moist, and filled with longing and homesickness.

"Flowers! Flowers from home!" he whispered; and Arabella relieved him of the burden, and brought him back to realities.

"Oh, Dad!" she exclaimed. "Isn't it lovely, the way the boys decided to come through with me? I don't know what I should have done without them. We've had such a good time all the way, and it is so far! And we are all so glad to know that you have made a fortune!"

Behind her, a small, retiring fat man winced, and looked uncomfortable. So that was what this fine old simpleton had wired, was it?—that he had already made a fortune! Burmah Jones rarely lacked plenty of self-assurance; but, for once in his life, he was timid and constrained, and devoutly wished that he were at least two thousand miles away, or—say—back in Fort Scott. But he was not to escape, for the Colonel, suddenly remembering him, wheeled and caught him by the arm.

"Arabella," said the Colonel, graciously, "I wish to have permission to introduce to you my sympathetic and understanding lieutenant, Mister William Burmah Jones!"

He doffed his hat, and bowed as if presenting an ambassador to a queen, and Burmah got red in the face and blinked like an owl, and with difficulty restrained a desire to scrape his feet, and tell her that she was "A peach!" He felt more at home in meeting the quartet of hopefuls who accompanied her, and mentally decided, with his customary quick appraisement, that they were all young men of means and address, and from both view-points would prove

desirable assets. Besides, he decided to himself in that same flashing thought, if he should be compelled to leave for parts unknown on some fast train, this quartet should be able at least to save the Colonel's life.

A shout of laughter disturbed them, and the persons in the immediate vicinity of the party began to crane necks in the direction of the front end of the train. A querulous old voice, filled with indignation, was heard above the noise of the station, shouting:

"Heah, White Man! You-all bettah leave dem baggage alone! Don' tek dem away from heah! Please, Sah!"

And on the top of that arose another and more militant voice:

"Dat-ar's Miss Arabella's juranium! You-all put dat down, or Ah'll jes nachurally swat you one dat'll double you up like a bolony skin when de stuffin's picked out! Gim me dat!"

Some familiar note in the voice, something recalling his old days of feudal protectorship, came to the Colonel, and he answered as if to the call of a bugle. With coat-tails flying and fists doubled, he whirled and swung down the patform, thrusting men aside as if they were straws, and plunged into a crowd up near the second-class sleeper steps. Uncle Jeff was there, again arrayed in his gold-braided uniform and ancient silk hat, but now some one had jammed it down over his head, where it clung, rumpled and ruffled. Aunt Sally was behind him striving to hold fast to the huge water-pitcher, a tray and a bird-cage, at the same time. At her feet was a bundle

wrapped in a bed-quilt scarcely less gorgeous than Uncle Jeff's regalia. A roaring, tantalizing crowd surrounded them, and beset them with rude jest. Through this, and to their aid, plunged the Colonel, wild-eyed, and excited. Uncle Jeff was manfully struggling with an expressman bent on removing an old and battered satchel; but the Colonel was immediately recognized by Aunt Sally, who shouted:

"Kunnell! Kunnell! Heah we-all! Make that low white trash pass back dat juranium! Dar he! Ovah dah!"

Appeal and jubilation rang in her voice, and she dropped the bird-cage to point a trembling hand at a van beyond. The Colonel lost no time. He sprang forward with the agility of excitement, shoved out of the way one who interfered, seized the geranium pot with one hand, and wrested it from Aunt Sally's tormentor, then, doubling a white old fist, smote the offender full on the jaw. Taken by surprise, although much younger and heavier than the Colonel, the man was knocked from his feet. The Colonel slipped the flower-pot under his arm, and struck another man who shouted a curse.

"There ain't no man livin' dares cuss out a Hatch," roared the Colonel, dropping into vernacular, and fuming with rage. "Is there any other pusson here who has anything to say?"

Having made his challenge, he stood there, white and trembling, with the flower-pot under his arm and the blossoming plant dragging limply downward. At once the disturbers began to fall back and give him room. Then the outer throng wavered, and

"There ain't no man livin' dares cuss out a Hatch!" roared the Colonel.

broke wide open, and there charged in, like a flying wedge, the quartet from Chattanooga, with a short, fighting, fat man as the apex. A policeman became entangled in the swirl, and came with them.

"Stop! Stop this!" shouted the executive of law and order. What does this mean?"

There was an instant's silence, and the man who had seized the cherished plant got to his feet, and began to struggle out of the crowd. The officer, deciding that this man must be the malefactor, plunged after, and caught him by the collar, threatening to use his club.

But the Colonel interfered.

"Mister Policeman," he said, in his most dignified voice, "I am Colonel Alonzo Fairfax Hatch. We-all have had a slight argument here, but it's over now. This man here surely did aggravate me; but there's no use in pesterin' with him. Let him go. I have no complaint. The Hatches have been able to take care of themselves, Sir, always."

The officer released his hold on the man who had been captured, and looked bewildered.

"Well, you're sure some square old guy," asserted the man, grinning at the Colonel.

"The same to you, Sir," declared the Colonel, magnanimously, and suddenly held the geranium out toward the officer. "Would you mind holding this for me," he asked, "until I can find my daughter, Miss Arabella?"

The policeman was so astonished that he sheathed his club, and accepted the plant, and stood with it in his hands. The Colonel saw Burmah, and the quartet of hopefuls and was overjoyed.

"Come on, let's get out of this," suggested the man from Kansas, cooling his anger. "Are these some more of your folks, Colonel?"

"'Deed we is," fervently responded Aunt Sally, before the Colonel had time to reply; and Burmah marshaled them, took the plant from the officer, and shoved his way out toward Arabella, who, infinitely distressed and excited, was hovering on the outskirts.

"It looks to me," muttered Burmah, "as if I had taken charge of an orphan asylum where all the young ones are the offspring of prize-fighters! Lord! I got to get them away from this!"

He deposited the plant at Arabella's feet, and looked for an instant over his shoulder to where the officer, again demanding order, was firmly compelling the crowd to disperse.

"Get a move on you! If you have no business here, get out!" he was ordering, and, when any one hesitated, he enforced his words with a shove. Already the station was resuming its normal activities, and the group stood alone.

"Now," said Burmah, "if you folks will wait here a minute, I'll fix everything up all right."

Before his words were finished, he had vanished.

He hastened out to secure cabs for the party. He hustled back with porters. He had the baggage counted. He took the checks, and saw to it that everything was undamaged. He was a general, marshaling his troops, and displaying efficiency in every move. He tactfully crowded the four young men into his own cab, and acted as a guide on the way to the hotel, displaying an amazing knowledge of Seattle, from its yearly tonnage to its land values and the

price of sky-scrapers. There was no question he could not answer off-hand, and his amazing memory for figures and details commanded his hearers' admiration. He maneuvered so deftly that he installed the quartet in his own hotel with rooms on the same floor, where he could have them under his eye, and cultivate them. There was no telling how useful they might be, and he, a past master at using men, had long before discovered that guileless young men with money were frequently profitable. He telephoned the hotel that entertained the Colonel and Arabella, an announcement that he would have the entire party there for luncheon, and all the time he was mentally formulating his campaign.

The Colonel, in the meantime, bubbling over with joy and pride, was being driven to his hotel. Every now and then he arose in his seat to look at the cab following in which were seated Uncle Jeff and Aunt Sally, still perturbed and frightened by their narrow escape, but mighty proud of that cab. Each time he looked at them, the Colonel waved his hand reassuringly, and each time that he waved Uncle Jeff arose and doffed his hat, and attempted to bow. Now and then Uncle Jeff did so inopportunely, and, as the vehicle jolted, was thrown back into his seat. The cab-driver seemed a careless sort of person, who smoked a pipe, and never so much as bestowed a glance on the Colonel or his own fares. It seemed as if fighting and hauling men in uniform were everyday events with him. His horses were scarcely less phlegmatic than he, for they stood without hitching when he halted before the servants' entrance, and

huddled passengers, plants, bundles, satchels and bird-cages out to the doorway. He said to the porter who came out:

"Take 'em in and preserve 'em carefully till they're wanted. There seems to be an old gink upstairs that's rather fond of them. Nice clothes this old coon's got on, ain't they?"

Then he drove away, thinking of the liberal fare he had mulcted from Burmah Jones, and was content.

The Colonel and Arabella had disappeared inside the rotunda, attended by porters carrying the hand-baggage, who stood respectfully behind them. For was not this man the great financier, whom the newspapers had made so notable? Was he not an exceptionally liberal man with his tips?

The Colonel had reached the very desk before he suddenly remembered something, and was shocked by his own negligence.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed, turning to Arabella. "I do declare I forgot all about engaging a room for you! Wonder if we shall be able to get it! You see, Honey, I've been so all-fired busy here, looking after things, that I just naturally overlooked it."

And Arabella patted his arm, and looked fondly up into his face, and told him that she had always understood that big financiers did have a heap to think about, and assured him, also, that she didn't want him to work so hard. A long string of commercial men was lined up at the register ahead of them, and Arabella had time to look around. The wonder of that wonder city of the North-west was dawning upon her, and thrilling her with its mar-

velous palpitation. Here before her were rough, sinewy, clear-eyed miners from Alaska, quietly observing everything, and saying little, as if the silence of the vast isolations of the North had sealed their lips. Cattlemen, black-hatted and bow-legged from the saddles of their youth, quietly discussed the price of beef, and at a table two young engineers in worn corduroys sat studying a drawing. A banker, clad as if he had just stepped from a Fifth Avenue hotel, immaculate and poised, was drawing gloves on his slender fingers, and a priest and a minister were exchanging greetings. At the cigar-stand in the corner of the rotunda, a girl, by nature a pronounced brunette, but now a startling blonde, was throwing dice with two men to see which of them should pay for the cigars, and the slang she used was so new and daring that Arabella was fascinated by it. Her inspection of those around was interrupted by the hotel-clerk, who discovered the Colonel, and abruptly left the register, and came to the end of his enclosure.

"Colonel Hatch—oh, Colonel!" the clerk shouted through the grating. "Mr. Jones made all arrangements for you, and ordered your personal belongings taken from your old room to the new ones. It's all attended to. Here, boy!" He banged a bell, and a bell-boy rushed forward. "Take Colonel Hatch and his daughter up to suite six, seventeen!"

"Now that was sure right nice of Burmah! He does do a mighty lot to help me," exclaimed the Colonel. "Come on, Arabella;" and he led the way in pursuit of the boy to the elevator.

Arabella could not restrain an exclamation of de-

light when the doors were thrown open; for Burmah had chosen, regardless of expense, the largest suite in the hotel, that which commanded the most noble views, with an outlook upon the majestic Olympics, the wonderful Puget Sound and the broad-flung forests in the distance. The room was filled with flowers, also bought regardless of expense, and they were everywhere impregnating the air with fragrance. All the surroundings bore frank evidence that Colonel Alonzo Fairfax Hatch had a bank-account big enough to buy the hotel, if he wanted it, and then, like a Coal Oil Johnny, hand it to a cab-driver. And the financier, not in the least disturbed as to where the means were to come from to pay for such extravagant quarters, thoughtfully approved of Burmah's selection. There was but one thing in the room that annoyed him, and that was a small, engraved and framed brass tablet, stating that this suite of rooms had once been occupied by a President of the United States. There were two reasons for his annoyance: the first that he thought it bad taste to boast so openly; and the second that the President mentioned had been a Republican President, while he, the Colonel, had never voted anything but a straight Democratic ticket. Before attending to anything else, he turned the tablet's face to the wall.

Arabella removed her hat, and then threw herself into his arms. He picked her up as if she were still a child, and carried her over, and seated himself in one of the big upholstered chairs, holding her very tenderly.

"My little girl! My little girl!" he whispered in

her ear. "I've wanted you, Honey, every hour since I left home. I've been thinkin' of you all the time—more than I did of makin' money. And now you're here with me, and we ain't goin' to be away from each other any more."

His hand patted her shoulders even as he had patted them when, a tiny child, she had sobbed for the mother that had passed forever from her sight; patted and comforted her even as it had when striving to assuage her childish sorrows. There were strength and love and understanding in his touch; there was his deep, constant longing for her in the cadence of his whisper. She alone fathomed the anxieties that had assailed him in all his adventures since he had wandered from his quiet, sequestered life to seek a new fortune, and so she rested, speechless and happy, in his arms. The quiet home on the Marquard plantation seemed now a scene of some past existence, and they, together, exiled into a hurly-burly world of noise and endeavor. The roar of the train carrying her across the thousands of miles was still in her ears, the scream of locomotives awakening her in the night; but above all, triumphant, yet soothing, that soft whisper.

"Home, my father," she said, "is where you are and where we can be together."

The Colonel gulped strangely, and then, to relieve himself, boosted her from his lap, and assumed a great air of direction.

"Now, you must go and take your bath, and get out of your traveling-dress," he said. "I'll call up the office, and tell them to send Mammy and Uncle

Jeff right up. They can help you unpack your stuff."

He sent for his servants, who came up timidly, being fearful of elevators and such modern improvements, which they had never seen, and broke into the room much as if they, too, sought protection. Jeff, who had been vastly disappointed because he could discover no colored brother who recognized the uniform of the Ancient Sons of Africa, was rehabilitated into a very homely, very gnarled old negro man.

"Now you and Jeff, Mammy, get busy around here, and do what is to be done," ordered the Colonel, as if speaking to children, "and I'll see what I can do. Hold on a minute. Where did they put you? In the coal-bin?"

"Lawseee, no, Kunnell!" replied Aunt Sally. "Dey done put us upstairs in two rooms. I ain't goin' to stand for no sech foolishness as dat. 'You jes fotch dat ole nigger you see comin' with me right in heah,' Ah says. 'Ah ain't goin' to have him gallivantin' aroun' whar Ah cain't look after him. He's mah ole man!' So now dey-all got us in one big, fine room most as good as dis. But tain't lak home, Marse Hatch. When we all goin' back home? We shore been away a mighty long time now."

With a great attempt at sternness, the Colonel chided her for talking too much, and then proceeded out of his new apartment with something almost approaching a swagger of proprietorship.

"De Kunnell done said he made his fortune and

a powful sight of money," Aunt Sally confided to Uncle Jeff in a hoarse whisper, after the doughty financier had departed, "an' Ah reckon from de looks of dis house he's bought he has. Dis is sure some house!"

The Colonel, in the meantime, stalking down the halls, betrayed another bit of good feeling by bowing to every one he met. He felt gracious toward the elevator-boy, and gave that pert youth as a tip a nice, new, shiny dollar. The world was at his feet, now that he had Arabella here by his side, his old household retainers to do his bidding, and a town named after him—a town that was to be the most famous in the West. He sauntered around the rotunda, and out to the street, where he beamed benevolently on all he met with a smile so frank and engaging that even those who had never seen or heard of him returned it with interest. Each atom of creation, on that day of Arabella's arrival, was numbered amongst his friends. He was satisfied with everybody and everything. Presently, he met Burmah Jones, escorting the Chattanooga quartet to luncheon at the Colonel's expense. Burmah stopped him.

"Saw you coming, Colonel," he said, deferentially, "and was glad to see you. I was just tellin' our friends here—" He paused suddenly, and eyed the lapel of the Colonel's coat. "For the Lord's sake, Colonel," he burst out, "why don't you get a new buttonholer? That stuff looks to me like hay."

"That, Mister Jones," said the Colonel, gravely, "is a flower from Tennessee."

The quiet dignity of the man made the others respect him, and Burmah most of all. He, a wanderer, who could with difficulty trace back the periods of his stopping in a long and constantly migratory flight, found in this ancient Southerner a new and engrossing puzzle. There was something awakening in Burmah Jones that responded to this natural sentiment on the part of Colonel Hatch.

"We are all goin' to have luncheon at your hotel, Colonel," he said, "and we were on our way. How is your daughter?"

"Yes, Colonel, how is Miss Arabella?" broke in a solicitous chorus, which the Colonel could not ignore.

"Thank you, Gentlemen," said the colonel, "Miss Arabella is very comfortable. You will see her at luncheon, I trust."

And the quartet agreed in the hope. Under Burmah's guidance, they turned back to the hotel, and waited for Arabella. When she appeared, the girl went directly to the man from Kansas, and thanked him for securing her such admirable apartments, and for gracing them with flowers. To his own surprise, as well as to the surprise of the Colonel, Burmah again found himself awkward and embarrassed.

"Say, that's all right, Miss Hatch," he stammered. "I wanted to do something, and that was —all I could think of. The flowers were—were—cheap."

Then, to escape from conversation, he led the

way out and downward to the private dining-room which he had engaged for his luncheon party.

Again, Arabella was compelled to give an exclamation of delight; also, she turned, and, for the second time, complimented the Kansan for his taste, a compliment which Burmah accepted gleefully, but without telling her that he had left the decoration as well as the bill of fare entirely to the judgment of a red-headed, bow-legged waiter, who had once been steward on a fish-boat. Burmah knew there was this to his own credit, that he had ordered regardless of expense, inasmuch as he proposed that the Colonel should pay the bill.

It was a wonderful luncheon. The Colonel, from the head of the table, beamed upon his daughter, his partner and his young friends, and warming under the influence of flowers and wine, expanded with satisfaction. Presently, he began to be fidgety, and Arabella, recognizing that he was threatening to burst into oratory, tried desperately to keep the conversation moving so swiftly that her father might find no opening. This ruse, however, did not succeed in checking the Colonel. Nothing could have stopped him—nothing less than the dynamiting of the hotel. He was "chuck full" of speech, and had to talk, or burst. There was nothing for it but to humor him.

A smiling Beau Brummel of the old school, he got to his feet, buttoned his coat very tightly, bowed deeply, and flamed into eloquence.

"Friends and fellow citizens, Miss Arabella and Gentlemen: Since we are gathered here together

like one great family at the festal banquet board, I deem it fitting to say a few words to those young gentlemen who have stepped from the threshold of their homes in our beloved South to engage in the pursuits of life. They come from the State where the birds sing the sweetest, where the flowers are the most fragrant and beautiful, where the women are the handsomest, the horses the fastest, and the citizens shining lights to the entire civilized world. It is with a feeling tinged with sorrow that I tell you that we who are here are to establish the one rival to the glorious city of Chattanooga. We are not traitors to that proud and beautiful city which we have left, but we are to be her pioneers. We are to show the world what people from Chattanooga can do. Off up to the north of us, cradled by blue waves and lofty hills, lies the dream city of Port Hatch. I can close my eyes, and see her lofty spires, her magnificent public buildings, her splendid parks, her beautifully paved streets, her wharves teeming with industry, and her school-houses filled with studious young citizens, all of whom shall do credit to this nation. Looking further into the future, I can see many of these pupils, now little boys bent over their books, becoming presidents, and senators, and congressmen, and police-commissioners. I wish to offer four standing toasts!"

With a perfected knowledge of the proprieties, the quartet promptly scrambled to its feet, and Burmah Jones, bewildered, also climbed up.

"I have the honor," said the Colonel, "to drink to the happiness of my daughter, Miss Arabella."

"Hurrah for Miss Arabella!" enthusiastically shouted the quartet.

"Now, to our mother city, the queen of Tennessee—Chattanooga."

The yell and response were not so fervent.

"Now, to that young giant metropolis, Port Hatch."

Only Burmah found his voice.

"And, last of all, to that wonderful dreamer, artist to his finger-tips, poet in his heart, gentleman by instinct, honorable as few men are, builder of empires—our host, Colonel William Burmah Jones!"

Arabella instantly jumped to her feet, waved her glass on high, and joined in the ovation. It was an ovation; but Burmah Jones suddenly got red in the face, his mouth hung open in astonishment, and he displayed all the symptoms of paralysis. It was the first time in his long and notorious career that anybody had ever accused him of being either honorable, or a gentleman. True, he had modestly, on various occasions, advertised himself as an empire-builder; but it was the first time that as many as six people had agreed with him. Also, there was another cause for perturbation. But all he said aloud, in response, was:

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

What he thought to himself as he sat down was:

"Hell, that old goat expects me to pay for this lunch!"

CHAPTER X.

AND THEY VISIT UTOPIA.

THE bells of the sound steamer, *The Golden Eagle*, were jangling in the depths of the engine-rooms below, and her whistle was bellowing its hoarse call for a landing.

Port Hatch was in sight. A young man, carrying a suit-case in one hand and a large thin, square package under his other arm, came hurriedly aft. He saw that the whole portion of the deck abaft the smoke-house was deserted, then suddenly dropped the suit-case, and used an impolite exclamation. It was "Little Billy." Immediately after him, in procession, one at a time, came Pick, Kirby and Tommy, and each in turn did exactly as Little Billy had, then scowled at the others. Little Billy suddenly tore the wrapping from the package under his arm, and in the casement of the smoking-room window stood up a nice new sign, tastefully done in blue and gold, which read:

WILLIAM REYNOLDS
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

The others in turn carefully undid their packages, each announcing that its owner was about to hang out his shingle. All of a sudden, the big form of Little Billy doubled over, in a mad burst of hilarity.

He jumped to the corner of the smoking-room, and waved an arm, in a gesture like the Colonel's, toward the bare headland they were approaching.

"See the lofty spires!" he shouted.

"And magnificent public buildings!" added Tommy.

"And splendid park!" chimed in Kirby.

"And her school-houses filled with industrious young citizens, all of whom shall do credit to this nation," chanted Pick, excellently imitating the Colonel's voice.

And then, joining arms in a circle, they danced quite gaily around their suit-cases, and sang it, to the tune of the "*Miserere*."

They were interrupted in this important ceremony by a voice from the corner:

"Well, for heaven's sake! What are you boys doing?" it asked; and they turned to see Arabella looking at them. Instantly they sobered, for it was pitifully plain that Arabella was almost on the verge of tears.

"What on earth are we to do?" she asked, with lips that, in spite of her attempt to be brave, were quivering.

"Do? One could do anything in a place like this. It's all and more than the Colonel said. I'm just tickled to death," Little Billy lied with enthusiasm.

"I never saw anything like it," bravely announced Kirby, which was really the truth.

"It's the most beautiful town site in the world," devoutly exclaimed Pick.

Tommy in the meantime had seized his suit-case and his sign, and started hastily forward.

"I'm not going to wait a minute longer," he declared. It would be the height of ingratitude for us not to hurry up, and thank the Colonel for the wonderful opportunity he has given us to practise law."

The steamer was approaching the little rickety wharf, the bells clanged, and the propellers suddenly reversed and thrashed. The entire population of Port Hatch was there to meet them. Skag and Flay, the fishermen, were draped lazily on a pile of lumber, chewing their cuds with the regularity of contented cows, and looking as though they had taken root, and grown there for a great many years. Young Lester, still with a humorous twinkle in his eyes, paused from bait-casting to watch the arrival. The "nice man from Iowa," the man to whom the Colonel had so graciously presented liberal portions of land, and his brother, were checking up a lighter-load of barrels of merchandise. Hubbard, the author of the "City Beautiful," bare-headed, with his long hair unkempt, and four or five days' growth of black stubble on his face, was the only citizen of Port Hatch who seemed to be "hustling." With a pencil behind one ear, a drawing-pen in his mouth, and a huge roll of plans under his arm, he danced nervously around the end of the dock while *The Golden Eagle* was throwing out her gang-plank. Up in the bow, the Colonel, surrounded by a wide-eyed, interested group, had reverently doffed his hat, and was making a speech.

"Fellow passengers," he was saying, "I call your attention to what is destined to be the most glorious city the world has ever known. And then, with an air of profound modesty, he added: "It has the honor to bear my name. It is called Port Hatch. Being as you are all wayfarers, I thought it would be of interest to you, sometime, to be able to say to your children, and your grand-children, and your great-grand-children, that you had seen the proud city of Port Hatch in its infancy. I

trust that you will remember it kindly, and that—"

"Say! ain't you a-goin' to get off here, Colonel Hatch?" a rude voice bellowed through a megaphone from the bridge; and the Colonel paused. "We're about to pull in the gang-plank, and are waitin' on you," the rude voice continued grumpily.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Colonel, frantically running toward the gang-way, with his coat-tails flapping around his long, skinny legs. But, even under that stress, he did not forget to be courteous. He stood on the stringer of the wharf, thrust one hand into the breast of his "Prince Albert," removed his big slouch hat with the other, and repeatedly bowed a gracious farewell to his erstwhile auditors as *The Golden Eagle* swiftly drew away from the most magnificent city of the world.

The Colonel was almost dazed with astonishment when he turned around. The wharf and the land adjoining suddenly became populous. Burmah Jones, with his hat planted determinedly on the back of his head, jumped here and there, answered questions, and gave orders like a general. The Colonel, slightly bewildered, hastened to him.

"Where—where—say, Burmah, where did all these men come from?" he questioned.

"Come from, Colonel?" replied Burmah. "Why, don't you remember telling me we ought to have at least five carpenters and a couple or three stonemasons and all the laborers I could get?" The Colonel's jaw dropped in sheer amazement. Having never so much as mentioned anything of the kind, it was quite natural that he should not remember. But he rallied bravely.

"It sort of slipped my memory," he said; "but

I suppose I must have suggested something of the sort. You're quite right, Sir. You are the most invaluable assistant I ever had in any of my great enterprises."

"I could only get a hundred laborers," Burmah hastened to add, "and they'll be up on the next boat, due here in about an hour. Got a special rate for them—chartered an old tub to bring 'em. Lot cheaper. And, by the way, you didn't mention it, but I thought best to have 'em bring a big tent to sleep and eat in, and some picks and shovels and scrapers, and six teams of horses."

"How thoughtless of me!" said the Colonel. "I'm glad you attended to it. But—say!" he cupped both hands, bent his tall form over until he could whisper in Burmah's ear. "How in the deuce are we ever going to pay for all this?"

"Pay for it? Humph! That's nothin', Colonel, I hired them by the month," placidly replied Burmah, and then, desperately afraid that the Colonel might ask more questions of a similar embarrassing nature, he made a pretext to rush forward to Arabella, who was standing on the edge of the land surrounded by her four admirers, each of whom still held his bright new tin sign under his arm. Even Burmah's self-possession was jarred by the sight of these inscriptions.

"What in the d—?" he burst out, then checked himself, and smiled sweetly.

"That's fine," he commented. "If there's any one thing the city of Port Hatch is goin' to need, it's plenty of lawyers. Welcome to our city, gentlemen. We'll start building a court-house right away. A town without a court-house ain't no good, nohow!" And then he suddenly fell to bossing his gang.

"But how the deuce are we ever going to pay for all this?" exclaimed the Colonel.

The Colonel had succeeded in arresting that dancing dervish, Hubbard, and was now triumphantly dragging him forward to be introduced. All around them the bustling confusion increased as Burmah's men began carrying the lumber off to a spot where he had decided to erect a temporary structure, to house the officers of the Port Hatch Land Company. Above all this clamor the Colonel's voice rose flamboyantly.

"Arabella," said the Colonel, gallantly, "I crave permission to introduce to you the world-famous originator and author of the 'City Beautiful,' who is to make this scene blossom like a rose. This young man had kindly loaned us his wonderful talent, and genius, in direction of our artistic endeavor. Mr. Hubbard, this is my daughter, Miss Arabella Hatch."

Hubbard, the derelict, became a polished gentleman once more, and no queen's courtier could have made a more deferential or graceful bow. The members of the quartet, young and inexperienced as they were, recognized in Hubbard an enthusiast and a dreamer, and were really glad to know him.

Arabella watched him curiously, and felt a little more hopeful, for, peculiar as he appeared, she intuitively divined that in Hubbard was competency that would probably qualify him for a great task. More than ever was she convinced of this when he led them to his working tent, and unfolded the plans over which he had worked night and day as his dream of an examplary city unfolded and grew. Forgetful of all else, he enthused as he explained, and became eloquent as he pointed out his plans. That his schemes involved the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars meant nothing to him,

for quite literally he had obeyed Burmah Jones' instructions to "turn himself loose."

Here on this spot was to be the public library, there the city hall; here was to be the public market, over there at the base of the cliffs the free baths; and here at the back of the town was where the little river would be dammed for a reservoir which should supply Port Hatch with water. Those lines extending to the far side of the peninsula indicated the sewage system, for, above all things, the "City Beautiful" was to be sanitary. Those red spots with little marks in them indicated lands that would be given away for church buildings. At this point, the Colonel exercised his prerogative as founder and employer to offer an objection.

"What did you say that spot there was?" asked the Colonel, reading with his glasses on his nose. "Unitarian Church, eh? Well please rub that out. There isn't going to be any church in Port Hatch that don't believe in hell," announced the Colonel, and for an instant he threatened to preach a sermon. But the author of the "City Beautiful" interfered by hastening onward with his discourse.

"This spot, here on the headland," he said modestly, "is the one that would be my personal selection for your residence, Sir. I have the plans and elevation for a home, which I should be glad to place at your service—a house that could find no more admirable setting."

The Colonel's eagerness was no greater now than that of Arabella, who clapped her hands joyously and said:

"Please show it. Please do, Mr. Hubbard."

Hubbard went over to a corner, and, somewhat diffidently, drew forth a large tin case from beneath

his cot, and selected therefrom a roll of drawings. Arabella and the Colonel were enraptured. The quartet leaned over their shoulders to share in the inspection. It was Tommy who suddenly smoothed down the corner, and exposed an inscription thereon.

"Why, what's this?" he asked; and then read: "Awarded a gold medal at the seventeenth annual exhibition of the American Architectural Society."

The derelict suddenly blushed a furious red, and was distressed.

"Yes, I drew it," he said, somewhat sorrowfully, as if it recalled high hopes and promise of a youth that had been squandered in dissipating. But he gave them no time for comment, and spoke rapidly, as if eager to prevent them from asking questions. "Such a residence, with some modifications, if you do not care for a building of such large proportions, could be erected for a sum not exceeding twenty-five thousand dollars."

"By George! Can it?" exclaimed the Colonel. "Mr. Hubbard, Sir, you're a genius. We'll commence building that house this very afternoon. Marvelous, Sir—marvelous!"

He suddenly whirled around, unable to suppress his enthusiasm, and seized Arabella in his arms.

"It shall be a place fit for a queen, the queen of my heart—you, Arabella!" he shouted, fondly. "We'll go right up there now, and look at it. Come on, everybody!" and he plunged excitedly out of the tent, with Hubbard, Arabella and the lawyers, still carrying their tin signs, following behind him. Little Billy recovered sufficiently to hide his sign under a pile of lumber, and in the succeeding minute the other three friends placed their's to keep his company.

Up to the headland they went, and whatever disappointment Arabella had felt at not discovering the city, which the Colonel so ably had pictured from his imagination, vanished as she stood there on one of the most beautiful spots in the world, and looked down at the sound far below. The peninsula came to a sharp point, lofty and rugged. From the site chosen for the house, they could see the sound on three sides, and the land's end seemed like a great tongue descending from the mountain behind. It came in a gradual sweep, forming gently a long flat. To her inexperienced eyes it appeared beautifully wooded. To one side, far below, she could see the tiny wharf, with men working upon it like pygmies intent on some foolish task. A black steamer, with a plume of smoke from its single stack, was coming slowly in, and Arabella surmised that this must be the one carrying the little army of invaders hired by Burmah Jones to begin the task of making a city. Far behind it came a small schooner, with sails drawing and decks piled high with lumber. Arabella did not know that the man from Iowa was seizing time by the forelock, and that within a short time Port Hatch would have a real lumber-yard. Out in the distance, another steamer, huge and majestic, but appearing small from the height on which they stood, drew and fascinated the girl's gaze. Brought up inland, the sea and its ships charmed her, and now she excitedly called the attention of her companions to that swift-moving shape.

"That is one of the Japanese liners, Miss Hatch," volunteered Hubbard, after looking at it a moment. "Outward bound for the Orient."

"And some day," asserted the Colonel, "she and

all of her class will stop here, as well as at Seattle. Then there will be immense docks down there below us, to which the railway will bring the wheat and the lumber from the interior, and pour them out for transport. Have you worked on the dock plans any, as yet, Mr. Hubbard?"

"Only roughly," answered the engineer, gravely. "That is too important a matter to be taken up carelessly. It is difficult to combine beauty and utility in docks, and we must make them perfect."

The arrivals from Chattanooga took heart. It was impossible to come in contact with such men as they had met thus far, and not begin to have a hazy belief that possibly, after all, there was something besides an air-castle in this undertaking. Confidence is contagious. The sublime faith of these persons that they were really creating a wonderful city was convincing. And why not a wonderful city? Here was as beautiful a site as could be found, a site looking out upon one of the most wonderful sounds in all the great world of waters. A great Transcontinental railway was expected to make this city its terminus. Hubbard, impractical in finance, but highly developed as a man with an ideal, knew nothing save that he had been rescued from a bar-room, and given unrestrained liberty to plan this place to the fashioning of his dream. He was desperately intent on proving to the world that had not previously given him a chance, that he could create an ideal city, and he worked the more tirelessly in that, at the same time as he labored, he was having the supreme battle of his life in the conquering of his appetite.

"How much of this land do you own, Colonel?" inquired Kirby, looking off toward the mountain.

"By Jingoes! I don't know. I never thought of that part of it," admitted the Colonel.

But he was saved a too deplorable show of ignorance by Hubbard, who quietly answered:

"The Colonel's farthest boundary line is the crest of that range of mountains you see back there, extending completely around the shores of the bay, and including this entire peninsula.

"Why, how splendid!" exclaimed Arabella, and the unsophisticated young men from Chattanooga looked at the Colonel deferentially; for here, indeed, was a great landed proprietor. Land values to them were measured by the standards of the South, where every foot was valuable, and they did not understand that the land whereon they stood, save for timber or town-site purposes, could be had almost as a gift.

They must write back to the home folk, and tell them what this marvelous man had accomplished, this distinguished man from Chattanooga, who had so bravely met misfortune, and gone West to conquer a savage world. They must let the folk know that pioneering was the real man's life, and that Chattanooga had other pioneers besides Colonel Hatch and his daughter. The wine of enthusiasm, poured out so lavishly in the first instance by that rare romancer, Burmah Jones, was mounting to their heads.

In the meanwhile, one of the pygmies down on the wharf, the one in shirt-sleeves and silk hat, was driving his men as many of them had never before been driven. Already he was displaying his splendid capacity for organization. He had appointed a foreman of carpenters, a foreman for the laboring gang, a time-keeper, and had started them to

work on the rough building that was to serve as an office and field headquarters, and now he was impatiently waiting, on the end of the dock, for the steamer bearing his laborers and outfit to pull in. Scarcely had she landed when he was urging them to "hustle," and, that no time might be lost, he hastened up to Hubbard's tent, and looked around in the hope of finding the genius on whom the Colonel depended.

The tent's being empty was proof enough that Hubbard was not there; so Burmah stepped to the fly, and, with a shout like the lower register of a calliope, called Hubbard's name.

"I think," said a calm voice almost at his shoulder, "you will find that your man is somewhere out on the point, making preparations to build a castle."

"Eh?" said Burmah, whirling around, to discover the placid Mr. Lester calmly leaning against a tent pole and smoking a much browned pipe. "Oh, it's you, is it?" he added, and then walked over until he confronted that young gentleman. "Say, what do you think of this 'City Beautiful' stuff? It's all tripe to me!"

For a full half-minute Lester stared at him, and Burmah could not decide during that time exactly what caused the look of half-merriment that was plainly depicted on Lester's face.

"What do I think of it? I think just this: that Hubbard, in his way, is the sanest man that has ever landed on Squaw Point. He knows what he wants to do, and he's going after it. Colonel Hatch is a lovely old dreamer; but, as far as you're concerned, I'll bet a dollar to a five-cent piece, that all in the world you're after is the money."

Burmah eyed him admiringly.

"Well," he said, with the utmost good-nature, "you're not the plain fool that I took you for. You do look like one, and, as far as I can figure out, the chief reason you've lived here so long is that you're too lazy to keep the flies off yourself. No hard feelin's—understand? It's every man's right to think what he blamed well pleases of another man. I've told you what I think of you, and I never have lost any sleep over what anybody thought of me."

For an instant, Lester straightened himself, and there was an angry flash in his eyes; but Burmah, with a laugh devoid of any malice, turned away from him, and trudged back toward the gang of men that was waiting for further instructions.

"You can fall-to on that beach there, the first thing," he ordered, "grub out those saplings on the hillside, until I can find the fellow I'm looking for. And keep 'em at it. I'm not going to have a hundred men drawing wages here for one minute unless they do somethin' for it. If you get that done before I get back, give 'em each a tin cup, send 'em down to the water's edge, and let 'em see if they can empty this ocean." After which, he trudged hurriedly away in quest of the author of the "City Beautiful."

He had nearly gained a half-way mark on the hill, puffing and dripping, before he paused to rest. Lamenting his rotundity, he sat down on a boulder to recover his breath, ran a shirt-sleeve over his wet forehead, removed his hat, and looked below to where his little army was spreading out. The ring of axes, as the swarm of laborers cleared away the scrub timber that encroached upon the beach, came faintly up to his ears.

"That," he thought to himself, "is just wasted labor. The suckers that buy land here are the ones that ought to be payin' for that; but I'll be hanged if I'm goin' to show the white feather for two hundred a day, and that's just about what that bunch of sheep-herders are supposed to be gettin'."

Casting his eye out toward the end of the wharf, something else attracted his observation. It was the schooner, laden with lumber for the man from Iowa. He clapped his hat on his head with an air of determination, and scowled, even as the deck-hands were lowering away a boat to bring a stern line to the wharf that he had caused to be constructed. He forget his breathlessness, and succumbed to a slow indignation.

"They're goin' to get their land for nothin', are they?" he said to himself, with a slow grin. And then: "Well, I guess not."

Abruptly he retraced his steps down the steep declivity, heedless of boulders, and fallen logs that obstructed his path, and toddled as fast as his short legs would permit out on the wharf to where the "nice men from Iowa" were waiting to begin the unloading of their cargo.

"Say," he blurted to the nearest, "you're the man who is goin' to open a lumber-, coal- and feed-yard here, ain't you? I'm William Burmah Jones, Colonel Hatch's partner.

"No, I'm the man that's goin' to open the hardware store," was the reply. Todd is my name. I'm J. P. My brother's J. W."

"Then it's J. W. I want to talk to," said Burmah, and promptly turned away to the other man.

"J. W." was a cadaverous-looking individual, with

high cheek-bones, a nose like a wandering minstrel, and pig eyes. Burmah quickly catalogued him. Honesty and acquisitiveness were portrayed on J. W.'s face.

"Hey," began the Kansan, "there seems to be some mistake here. Why are you landing lumber on my wharf?"

J. W. hastened to explain, while Burmah assumed an appearance of perturbation.

"There seems to be some sort of mix-up," he declared, with a vast sorrow on his fat face. "To begin with, I understand the Colonel gave you the wrong number on some lots. That place, where he told you you could plant your lumber-yard, isn't open at all. I told the Pacific and Oriental Steamship Company they could have that for a dock more than three months ago." He lied with the engaging candor of a child.

The two men from Iowa began a loud and violent protest; but they were checked by the fat man, who snapped his fingers in their faces.

"Say," he bawled, with an abrupt pretense of anger, "what did you fellows expect for nothin'? Don't you know that every foot of this water-front down here is goin' to be worth from two to five hundred dollars a front foot, within the next six months? You didn't think that the Colonel meant to present you with fifteen thousand dollars worth of property in order to get a dinky little lumber-yard up here, did you? Why, he's tryin' to be your friend! He's givin' you a chance. He's lettin' you in on the ground floor. The land that he meant is off up there in the tide flat. What is the lot that you thought he gave you?"

The brothers from Iowa hastily consulted memorandum books.

"Lots A, 217, to A, 230," they asserted.

"Oh, I see how that is," calmly asserted Burmah, consulting an absolutely blank page in a memorandum book, which he took from his own pocket. "You simply made a mistake in the letter. What the Colonel said, was that he'd give you lots K-217 to 30, they're the ones away back up yonder."

The place to which he pointed at that hour of the day was on a sloping beach that lay flat and glistening in the sunlight. The brothers from Iowa shaded their eyes with their hands, and stared at it. Despair was on their faces.

"Why, it would cost two or three thousand dollars to build a wharf up there," J. W. asserted gloomily.

"But what do you expect?" demanded Burmah. And then he suddenly became the suave and seductive dealer in real-estate. "You gentlemen seem to overlook the fact that you get the first lumber-yard, and the first hardware store, in what is bound to be one of the biggest cities in the whole North-west. You get a chance to make hundreds of thousands of dollars here, and now you stand around, like a pair of kids, full of green apples and screamin' for paregoric, all because there's been a little mistake made on your part."

"But we've got a schooner load of lumber, and enough stuff to stock a small hardware store, right here, now, and no place to put it," screamed J. W., as if in acute pain.

Burmah Jones was the soul of sympathy. He threatened to do anything, from tendering his own purse, to weeping on the brother's shoulders.

"It's too bad," he almost wailed. "It's too bad!" And then he suddenly brightened. "But say, you didn't blow in all the money you've got, did you, on this stock?"

The Todd Brothers, carried by storm, admitted that they had some money left.

"Then," said Burmah cheerfully, "you can afford to pay five thousand dollars for the land up there at that corner of the cove, where there is deep water, and I will see that you get it, even if I have to take more out of my own pocket to make good."

It is doubtful if he ever brought to bear more persuading magnetism and eloquence than he poured out on the Todd Brothers within the next hour and a half. But, at the end of that time, he had magnanimously permitted them to unload their schooner, and temporarily use the spot cleared by the laborers on the beach, and had in his pocket a thousand dollars in cash, and a ninety-day note for three thousand additional.

"Well," he remarked to himself, complacently, as he watched Hubbard, Arabella, the Colonel, and the quartet descending the trail, "this reminds me of a thing that used to be in my copy book at school: 'Count that day lost whose low-descending sun views o'er thy work without some worthy person done.'"

CHAPTER XI.

YET THE KNAVE RESTS NOT.

"This Port Hatch, I want to tell you fellers, is no joke," asserted Burmah Jones, addressing the four young lawyers from Chattanooga in the privacy of the new office the following morning, after their return to Seattle. "It's the biggest opportunity that was ever offered to a bunch of people to make money. Now, if you fellers have got anything, you want to get busy. I'm a lot older than any of you, and I'm no financial shark. I don't know nothin' about it, except this: that there's a ten-to-one bet that it's goin' to be the big railway town of the North-west, outside of Seattle; also, that the Colonel would naturally favor you more than anyone else in the world. He'd let you in on the ground floor of everything. He told me so; but said I wasn't to influence you. I'm not. I'm just tellin' you that, if you have any money loose, you want to get aboard before it's too late. You can buy land now for five hundred a lot that will be worth five thousand before this year slides out. And that ain't all! You owe it to yourselves, the Colonel, Chattanooga, and Miss Arabella, to take hold."

He paused impressively, and the four young men, who were lounging around in attentive attitudes, nodded briskly to show that they were ready to do the "taking hold" as soon as a place for a grip should be exposed.

"Listen!" Burmah went on, in a confidential tone, after glancing around the room as if about to expose

a secret that must not pass beyond them. "Colonel Hatch is one of the greatest financial geniuses that this country has ever known. He sees away off three or four miles, while the rest of us are like sprinters at a country fair, lookin' at the white tape just fifty yards up the track. It's up to us to do the short distances, and let him advise us for the big finish. Now, are you with me?"

"We are," they asserted in solemn chorus. Show us how?"

"Got any money?" asked Burmah, cautiously. "For, if you have, you ought to take advantage of this chance."

The members of the Chattanooga contingent looked at him earnestly, and then at one another.

"I could take a few lots," asserted Little Billy, fumbling in his pocket for a cheque-book.

"Me, too," asserted Tommy, not to be outdone in this great work of boosting Port Hatch.

"First come, first served," cheerfully asserted Burmah, striving hard to keep his gratification masked, and looking expectantly at Pick, who could not stand the pressure, and announced that he, too, would like to have at least two lots; but Kirby refused to declare himself, and sat quietly. Burmah's eyes gleamed a little savagely, but he made no comment on Kirby's hesitancy.

"Very well," he said, stepping to the wall, and un-rolling the set of plats that he had brought back from Hubbard's work tent. "Now, if you want my advice, I shall say that this part here"—he indicated with a fat forefinger—"will probably be the main business street. Indeed, I shall tell you in confidence that it is Mr. Hubbard's plan to induce

merchants to build up here, so that the beach land, down there, can be sold for warehouses, factories, piers, ship-yards and all that. If I were like you fellers are, I'd own all that land up there on Main Street. There's where the contract for pavin' is let. It'll be the first street paved in the town. Now, how many lots do each of you want?"

With the exception of Kirby, they all invested, and the real-estate agent calmly pasted little red tags, reading "Sold", on each one as picked out. Kirby still held back as if sceptical; but Burmah Jones did not even look at him. Far be it from Burmah to coax anyone to buy land in Port Hatch! From their wallets, the three purchasers drew out their drafts and certified cheques, and gravely made their first venture. Into the capacious wallet of Burmah Jones went the narrow slips of paper.

"Now," he said, briskly. "I shall see to it that your deeds are forthcomin' at once, and in the time it takes to get 'em ready you shall have my receipt."

"Oh, never mind that, Mister Jones; we trust you. The Colonel's introduction is enough for me," stoutly asserted Tommy, and into this chorus joined Pick and Little Billy, while Kirby began to feel like an outsider, but was still too cautious to venture. Burmah observed the thin-drawn scowl on Kirby's eyebrows, and decided that this young man might give trouble, and began placing mental sentinels on guard. Privately, he had learned that Kirby was the wealthiest of the young men from Chattanooga; hence he rather resented that Kirby did not "chip into" this jack-pot that he was so carefully arranging. But not so much as a quiver of an eye-lash betrayed this distrust.

"Everything has to have a head to it," he observed, leaning back and feeling the crinkle of seven thousand dollars' worth of drafts and cheques in his pocket. It's only right that you young men should get in with me now, and boostin's what makes the globe whirl. If there warn't somethin' to keep it rollin', it might drop out through space, and become as dead as the moon. So, as I'm the one that's doin' all the hirin', under the Colonel's suggestions, I'm goin' to say somethin' more. There'll be no law business in Port Hatch for some time; but we need a lawyer up there."

The quartet agreed on this.

"Suppose, then, that we have Kirby Smith go up there and attend to that. We'll have an office built for him, right away, somewhere close to the offices of the Port Hatch Land Company."

Kirby thought this was very fine; but the others looked glum.

"He can make his expenses from his clients," suavely said Burmah, and Kirby, already compromised by an acceptance, had to agree, or appear mean.

"Did I hear you say, one day, that you had edited a paper at the College?" politely queried Burmah of Pick.

The latter proudly asserted that this was true.

"Then, seein' as we have to start a paper right away," observed Burmah, making industrious memoranda with a pencil, "we must buy a printin' plant, and have Mr. Pickett open the semi-weekly newspaper. We'll talk about its name later."

Pick, while not entirely satisfied, nodded, and not even this slight show of reluctance escaped the sharp eyes that watched him.

"The owner of the first newspaper in Port Hatch," observed Burmah, as if to himself, "has a big responsibility. An editor that's any good is the heaviest force any community ever gets. Think of Horace Greeley, and Charley Dana, and Colonel Blethen," he said, "and of all they've done! Are you sure you can fill the bill?" he demanded anxiously of Pick.

Thus put on his mettle, Pick was certain that he could. And so Burmah had adroitly arranged to divert Kirby, who had not bought lots, and Pickett, who had been the last to come forward with cash, to scenes other than those that might be too active.

"Well," assented he, as if hesitant, "that shall be your chance."

He thoughtfully whirled in his new chair, and looked down the street, as if coming to some momentous decision. Below him the totem-pole in Pioneer Square loomed ancient and ugly. In that long, open space, street-cars whirled, and clamored with loud warning bells. Its activity fascinated him, in spite of his efforts at concentration, but he brought his responsive mind back to business. Here were three young men, at least, who believed in him, three young men starting out in life, who trusted to his generalship. For a full minute he struggled with a half-defined desire to return them their money, and tell them to walk out, advising them that it was all but a huge joke. Then, habit mastering him, he went ahead, inflexibly, with his plans, even as the spider goes steadily forward with the web that is to enmesh those venturing too close to its industry.

"I'm goin' to offer to Mister Reynolds," he said, quietly, "the position of Secretary and Treasurer

to the Port Hatch Land Company—a firm, and not a corporation—at a salary of two hundred dollars per month, and with an interest in the stock should it be made a corporation, which seems possible.

Little Billy's gasp of gratification had not subsided before Burmah went on in that same level voice:

"And I'm goin' to choose as General Publicity Agent for everything pertainin' to Port Hatch, Mr. Travers, because I believe that him and me'll understand that part of the game, and get along together, and he will get the same money. Mr. Smith gets the fees from the law business that's bound to come; Mr. Pickett gets the first newspaper in Port Hatch, and we give him the plant to start with. The others get salaries, and can be on the inside of what ought to make us all rich. So, there you are!"

There was not one of them, college-bred as they were, which he was not, cultured as they were, which he was not, educated to dress, which he was not, who could tell why, when he made this flat, uncompromising statement, they had no vocal objection to offer. All they knew was that in the man was some quiet leadership, some indefinable power that made them accept anything he said as an ultimatum. There was but one who was not disappointed, and that was Kirby Smith, who had been given his ambition. Yet Kirby Smith understood that, for some reason he could not fathom, he had been squarely placed outside the breastworks of profit. He, as well as the others, surmised that, if they had arisen together, and voiced a protest, this same fat, badly dressed man would have told them that he had no desire save to meet their wishes, and that, in accordance, he would immediately present them with

three little houses in Port Hatch, leaving each of them to recover from beneath a lumber pile his brave shingle, and hang it fluttering to the winds to creak itself into rusty uselessness. Each would have been permitted to practise law as best he might, knowing all the time that this strange, inscrutable man, vulgar yet Napoleonic, would see to it that all business was transacted by Seattle lawyers. They did not in the least pause to consider that favors had been bestowed in exact proportions to favors given. Little Billy had become the Kansan's right-hand man because he had been the first to show his faith with money; Tommy had come next because he had been second; Pick third because he had been third; and Kirby Smith was cut off as being the one who was not amenable.

"Now," the quiet voice of Burmah went on, "we shall each give the other feller all the assistance we can. If Mr. Smith has a library, he will want to send for it; or, if he hasn't, he may want to find one that he can buy cheap."

There was a certain suggestive emphasis on the last word.

"Mr. Pickett will probably want to go out and find a plant for printin' a newspaper. And, by the way, I think you'd better buy a linotype. We can't tell how soon the paper will have to print a daily issue."

Pick began to see rainbows.

"And my new immediate assistants will come to me this afternoon, so's we can discuss our campaign," asserted Burmah, thus airily dismissing them. Quite surely, he was welding them all to his will—and this was merely that he, Burmah Jones, should

get all there was to be had, and then step away, silently and gently, always within the law, before the great air-castle crumbled.

They separated, and Burmah was left alone to meditate, and to arrange his plans. Everything now was to focus upon one point, to get action and results as speedily as possible, and constantly to present an appearance of sincerity. Little Billy's very frankness, his bigness, his candid smile, his pleasant voice, his taciturnity, would make him the ideal man to meet persons in the Seattle offices, and these talents would render him effective. Those who came to investigate would be convinced, and spend their money. Tommy, fiery, ingenious and impressionable, could be enthused, and would make an ideal press-agent. The only trouble with him was that he was too honest to lie willingly. He must be molded to modern business ideas, which Burmah Jones was not alone in believing consisted of, "No matter what the means, so long as the end is gained." Pick, it was certain, would become indefatigible in whatever he attempted. The Port Hatch paper, printed before there was a subscriber possible outside of Todd Brothers, "nice men from Iowa," would be creditable enough to send out to the East as advertising matter. It could be filled with advertisements of Seattle merchants, when once they were convinced that a certain number of copies were to be sent broadcast, because nowhere in the world had there been massed together a more progressive set of men than those who wielded the commercial destinies of that wonder city of the North-west. And Kirby Smith? Hang Kirby Smith! Let him sit in his office, presented gratis, and watch the town grow

beneath his eyes while he waited hopefully for a client.

Burmah was at the dock to meet the Colonel and Arabella when they arrived, that he might be the first to inform the blossoming financier of the arrangements he had made. As usual, everything met with the Colonel's approval.

"Couldn't have taken care of my young friends better myself," declared the Colonel. "I don't see how it is that your ideas and mine always run so closely together, Burmah."

And the odd part of it was that the meant it.

"Now," said Burmah, "I must tell you something else. The boys, all except Mister Smith, bought lots on Main Street. I telephoned the pavin' company, and their men will begin work there to-morrow. I telephoned to the contractors to come in, and bid on your house, because the sooner we get that under way, the quicker folks'll know we mean business. I've hired two more stenographers and a book-keeper. If you want me to, I'll start in to get out some advertisin' matter that I think we'd ought to have."

And to all this Colonel assented with alacrity. But that feature over which he enthused most was that the young men from Chattanooga had evidenced their faith in him by buying lots. He referred to this immediately after he had reached the new offices, seen Arabella depart for her hotel, and seated himself comfortably in the private room that Burmah had alloted to his use.

"The lots I sold them, Colonel," said Burmah, quietly, "are all from your land with the exception of one, which I believe is mine."

He reached into his pocket, and took out the

cheques and drafts, and laid them on the desk before the Colonel, who scowled at them, to appear very business-like and cautions, as he scrutinized the endorsements.

"Seven thousand dollars," he said, as if hypnotized by the sum. "Why, that's as much as I had left when I came away from Chattanooga."

He laid the slips of paper on the desk, and whirled toward the real-estate agent with a warm gleam in his eyes.

"Mister Jones—Burmah," he said, "it isn't fair for me to grasp all this opportunity, Sir, when you are the one who brought it to my consideration. No, Sir, it isn't fair. I want you to do me the favor of accepting half this money as your own. I want you to do more than that. I want you to take half of everything that comes in from all those lots we had surveyed, from now on."

Burmah had not expected this generosity. He had confidently believed that by the use of diplomacy he would get his share and a little more of all that was sold; but he had not, in his wildest moment, hoped that the Colonel would offer him half of the total receipts. But not by the slightest twitching of a muscle did he display any emotion.

"Thank you, Colonel," he said, with beautiful simplicity. "I accept your offer in the same spirit in which it is made. It's a pleasure to do things with the right man at the helm, and you're it."

The Colonel beamed at this praise, and, as he carefully divided the cheques on the desk, replied, with due modesty:

"Making money is very easy, after all, Burmah. It consists in knowing how. You have no idea how

long I studied over finance after it—ahem—became necessary for me to enter into commercial pursuits."

He pocketed the cheques, and stood up with an air of industry.

"I must go right down now," he declared, "and buy some lumber to build my house with. No—maybe I'd best buy it off Mr. Todd. A very nice man is Mr. Todd. We must patronize our home merchants."

"But, Colonel," objected Burmah, "I telephoned for some contractors to come around, and give you a bid on the house!"

The Colonel looked at him blankly.

"That's the best way to get 'em built, you know," Burmah went on, "and the contractor likes to buy his own material."

"I'll declare I never thought of that," said the Colonel. "It seems to me that down in Chattanooga 'most every one tends to all that himself. Building's a little out of my line."

"Then," said Burmah, cheerfully, "you just leave those plans you brought, and let me talk to the contractors."

"Thank you, Burmah," replied the Colonel. "That might save time. I've got a heap of things to attend to. I'm a powerful-busy man.

He promptly departed for his hotel, from which, carefully groomed, he emerged two hours later to take Arabella for a long drive in a hired touring car—this being the important business that occupied his attention. And Burmah Jones, heavy and glowering, was brow-beating the different contractors that had come at his behest, and driving them to give quick estimates, and displaying a knowledge of all

the details of contracting that compelled the reluctant admiration of those with whom he wrangled. A week before he would have frankly informed the contractors, that he expected to get a good fat commission for giving them the job, and that they had to figure him in on the profits; but now, with the Colonel's generosity still biting into his mind, he had not the heart, and fought as valiantly for the Colonel's interests as if they were his own, and an able fighter he proved.

"I'm a sucker for doin' it," he communed with himself that evening, after he had closed a contract much to the Colonel's advantage, "but a feller can't be a hog. That is a new way of playin' the game with me, but I guess it'll come out all right in the end, and that I'll come pretty near gettin' all that's comin' to me."

Then, with sudden impatience, he added:

"Hang the Colonel! Why in the devil can't he do somethin' mean, or somethin' to give me an excuse to hand it to him right? If he'd only lie to me, or try to skin me, or do somethin'—'most anything, so I could have a little interest in my work!"

And the Colonel, at that moment, was sitting in a box at the Opera House, surrounded by the four young men from Chattanooga and Arabella, all in perfect evening dress, and being pointed out by many in the audience as the millionaire financier who was going to make Port Hatch a rival of the great city of Seattle.

CHAPTER XII.

A RACE FOR A FORTUNE.

Burmah sat in his office in Seattle with a divided mind, a most unusual state of things with that astute gentleman, while in the reception-room outside numerous prospective clients of the Port Hatch Land Company awaited interviews. Some of these scanned the printed matter which the same Burmah Jones had written with great sapience, for in response to these circulars they had come from all quarters of the United States, the advance guard of the great army of those who wish to get rich quick. There were farmers from Illinois, mountaineers from Tennessee, planters from Mississippi, cattle-men from west of the Rocky Mountains, and a number of those refugees who had succeeded in escaping from the conservative States of Massachuetts, New York and Connecticut. The latter sat stiffly in their chairs with a godlike air of knowledge, supercilious and thoroughly convinced that outside of the very wards in which they had lived there was nothing worth knowing. These, particularly those from New York, would be the first and easiest lambs to be shorn by the Kansan. In his classification, the next easiest would be those from the South, while the cattle-men of the West would be the last whose pockets he would pick. For a long time, his assertion had been this:

"Life is too short to waste on the wise guys. There's no place in the world where the market for gold-bricks is so good as in New York, because in the

big jay town they're too sure they know it all to ever know anything."

On the desk in front of Mr. Jones lay a bank-book neatly balanced, its figures disclosing the fact that he had cash enough on hand to go back to Kansas, and open a First National Bank, in a small city. He was thoroughly convinced in his own mind that the time was ripe for his departure; yet, being a good gambler, he was restrained by the fact that, in the outer waiting-room, there was more money to be had through his never failing and constantly seductive line of argument. He was a virtuoso in playing upon the weaker strings of humanity. He could talk religion to a preacher, orthodoxy to a priest, horse-racing to a turf man, or the price of rice and bacon to a grocer. He could discuss stocks with a broker, or the best method of salting gold mines with a bunco man. He could be firm with a financier, obstinate with the obstreperous, or deferential to the great. He could brow-beat a pugilist, or cry like an undertaker. Furthermore, he knew exactly the man whom he should introduce to Colonel Hatch seated comfortably in the inner sanctum, and also the hundred others to whom the Colonel should never be introduced. He had strained through industrious days and fevered nights, financing Port Hatch, in those three months that had elapsed since that day he calmly stripped the Todd Brothers of four thousand dollars. The golden stream was beginning to rush in—a flood of yellow, in return for the money he had spent in extensive newspaper and magazine advertising. A Federal inquiry as to whether or not he was using the mails for fraudulent purposes, had been routed utterly, and the notes cashed by two banks had been deftly met. The wages of that

army of employees, which he had driven to the point of heart-break, and that, too, without the remotest idea of ever paying, had been paid, and this he considered a piece of misfortune. No man had come seeking employment whom Burmah Jones had not employed, and, with the rapidity of a hot-house flower, fertilized and nurtured, Port Hatch had become a city. The magic of a magician's wand seemed vested in the fat hand that now toyed with the ruler in the private office of the Port Hatch Land Company.

"This thing's got to bust, like a toy rubber pig when some kid bites his tail off," he reasoned. "When it does, and a lot of those boobs get busy nosin' into the affairs of this Port Hatch Land Company, there'll be at least three more nice rooms in some man's jail occupied by quite permanent tenants. The Colonel may get three years. Hubbard will probably get two, and it's up to me to decide right now whether me or Little Billy is to have the third one. I did the best I could to keep the Colonel from having Arabella's picture put on all his letterheads and cheques, but the old cuss insisted on it so hard that I had to lay down my hand, and that'll drag her into it."

He gave a deep and troubled sigh, for he was coming to a decision, and it was exceptionally slow for one who had the admirable habit of saying yes or no, when pressed for time. Greed and a moral sense that had been long subjugated, but now struggled for a chance, were having a fight. Whatever he might do, this was the turning point. All his life he had been the first rat to leave the sinking ship. Now, to his own amazement, he found himself aboard a foredoomed craft that held him. His native shrewdness told him that the ship must sink, and yet

he had come to love the planks over which he slipped and struggled. Moreover, he was confronted with another necessity for decision, inasmuch as the affairs of the Seattle office were at such a stage that it must become secondary in importance to the office in Port Hatch, now presided over by Little Billy, who had become a first-rate realty agent. Little Billy's place in the Seattle office had been filled by a perfectly competent middle-aged man, named Billings, who sold realty and answered questions just as automatically as an agent in a great railway station sells tickets, and gives information; a man always polite and suave, never hurried, never annoyed, always willing and always ready. The Port Hatch *Semi-weekly Banner* was a success, and had an enthusiastic editor with high ideals as to the power of the press. Profound editorials issued from that distant sanctum, advising presidents of their errors, telling congressmen and senators for what bills they should vote, and deploring the decline of Great Britain. It was a paper without hobbies or animosities, and had once gained metropolitan notice, when it observed the fact that the New York *Sun* had failed to accuse William Jennings Bryan of being the cause of the Ohio floods. Pick was making money, and liked his place. The publicity department had flourished under Tommy so effectually that Burmah Jones had once remarked to himself:

"I'll make that boy the most accomplished liar in the world, if I can only handle him for three months more."

Kirby Smith had no money; but hoped on, and still retained a fine faith in the majesty of the law. Everything ran as smoothly as a six-cylinder car just out of the agent's hands; but Burmah feared

that, like the same six-cylinder car, the whole machine might balk at any moment. He had always insisted that the greatest art in playing poker consisted in knowing when to lay down your hand, and, as far as he could reason, he neared the point in the Port Hatch game where the hand, even though it held four kings, should be deftly tossed into the discard. To-day, he would have to take the boat for Port Hatch, or write a letter pleading some excuse. The excuse might be worded to the effect that he had been called East suddenly by the death of a dear old aunt. And then—good-by forever!

His meditations were cut short by the entrance of Billings.

"Mr. Jones," said that paragon of agents, "there's a guy outside here that wants to talk with you personally. Says his deal's one too big to be handled by anybody but the chief."

"Send him in," said Burmah, wearily, wondering if this were simply a false alarm. But he stiffened himself with a jerk when he saw the man who entered, for here was one who looked like ready money and plain business.

"I am Henry Conover," said the visitor, extending a neatly engraved card with a well-gloved hand.

Burmah arose to shake hands, and to offer his visitor a seat. He looked at the card as if more closely to observe the name; but at the same time he was mentally appraising Mr. Conover. The latter, a square-jawed, keen-eyed, clean-cut man, of perhaps fifty years of age, every line of whose face betokened commercial acumen, dropped into the proffered chair, and settled into its leathery billows. For some reason, he seemed to be studying the face of Burmah Jones as if speculating whether or not that

face was familiar; but, if he believed himself acquainted, by picture, or hear-say, with Burmah, he seemed unable to recall him, and was more at ease.

"I have two partners," he said, without waste of time, "who, with myself, have been handling Omaha real estate, and we've decided to seek a new field. We have been up at Port Hatch, and it looks good to us. I suppose there is room for more agents unless the Railway Company wishes to dispose of all its lands in its own behalf?"

Burmah's soul thrilled with joy. Here was a man who believed the current talk that the big Transcontinental Railway was coming to Port Hatch, and that the Colonel was merely one of its own financiers, handling its realty department. To strike while the iron is hot was a maxim with Burmah, and he swung around in his chair with a seductive air of frankness and sincerity.

"The Company does desire to handle its own property, Mr. Conover," he said; "but, at the same time, it's a mighty liberal company. It gives men a chance if they can show that they are out to boost the Company's game. What can we do for you?"

"We thought perhaps you would be willing to sell us enough land for an entire subdivision," said Mr. Conover, as calmly as if discussing big deals were his forte.

"How big?" demanded Burmah, entirely unruffled, and suppressing his eagerness.

"That depends, of course," said the man from Omaha. "But, if we can get the right kind of a deal, we might take as much as a couple of hundred thousand dollars' worth."

Burmah had to stare out of the window to keep

the visitor from seeing the rapacious gleam that came into his eyes.

"Cash?" he asked, in a perfectly quiet voice.

"Half cash, and the rest on payments," said Conover; and then Burmah settled down to the skilful defense, thrust and parry of the trained dealer. But the man from Omaha proved a worthy foeman in the battle for odds, and stood inflexibly on his first offer. For three hours, they were like two expert chess-players, meeting pawn with pawn, or moving castles forward to the defense, and in all that time Burmah never exposed his cupidity, but talked as if a hundred thousand cash meant nothing whatever to a company that was spending millions of dollars in the construction of a railway.

He was convincing, he was masterful. He persuaded the stranger that this deal would show an enormous profit, and he put an ornamental climax on his attitude when he asserted that he, personally, did not favor the deal at all; and that he would have to lay the matter before his superior, Colonel Alonzo Fairfax Hatch. Also, the Colonel was a very busy man, and probably would not have time to devote to it for a few days; but Burmah would try to find opportunity to discuss it with him some time within the week. He had to write the Colonel on some other matters that were highly important, and would bring up this matter also. Finally, he doubted whether the Colonel would consent to the terms offered. . . . . And, by the way, had Mr. Conover any references?

The man from Omaha, now more eager than ever to engage in the transaction, responded by extracting the most fulsome recommendations from his pocket, and a bank-letter of credit, showing that he could pay a hundred thousand dollars, and still have

sufficient left for operation. Burmah read through all these gravely, with a bored air, and handed them back.

"Well," he said, arising, "I can say no more to-day, Mr. Conover, and I am a very busy man. I can't even spare the time to go up and see the Colonel, but will write him. I will give you an answer in three days from now, if the Colonel can get to it, and give a decision. If he can't, you'll have to wait, or drop it. Personally I can't advise him to take it; but he does things about as he pleases, and that's all there is to it."

And then came the first real shock that Burmah had sustained during the highly pleasant interview.

"In a way, I am glad to hear that Colonel Hatch is the one who must make the decision," the visitor said; "because my partners are there in Port Hatch now, and I shall immediately send word to them, by this afternoon's boat, so that they, too, can go and have a talk with the Colonel." He consulted his watch, and hastily slipped it back into his pocket. "May I use your telephone?" he asked politely.

"Certainly," assented Burmah, swinging it toward him. And, as the man talked, through Burmah's mind flashed all the possibilities—and all threatened disaster. He had made it so plain that he was too busy to go to Port Hatch himself and interview the Colonel that it would never do for him to change front, lest the prospective purchaser become suspicious. Suspicion would, at the least, mean delay in closing the big sale, and delays might prove worse than dangerous. Suspicion, if carried to the point of astute investigation, would terminate the entire transaction, and such an opportunity would probably never come again. He had played his game of non-

chalance too strongly, and now found himself blocked on every possible move, as far as words were concerned. He had advanced his pawns prematurely.

Conover had been connected with the number he desired, and Burmah walked to the window, and stared down into the street, attempting to appear disinterested, while listening with strained auditory nerves. Every word came to him distinctly.

"You are the agent for the Port Hatch boat?" asked Conover, and then: "I have an important message to give you that I have not time to send down. Will you write it for me, and give it to the purser of the boat to be delivered to some messenger in Port Hatch? Thank you. All ready? Here it is: To Mr. Charles Wellington, at the hotel. Will you and Frank make it a point to have a talk with Colonel Hatch, just as soon as possible, about our proposed deal, and use every endeavor to get him in a frame of mind to close it quickly? Important that you succeed for all depends on him. Sign it, Conover. Repeat it, please. Thank you. I will come down later, and pay you for your trouble and expense. Good-by."

Conover arose, and thanked Burmah; and the latter's thoughts were swiftly planning even as he reached to his desk, and pressed the bell that summoned Billings. At the same time, he picked up another visitor's card, and examined it thoughtfully, as if thinking of the next interview, an action which Conover, being a well-trained business man, accepted as a dismissal.

"Well, I shall call in to see you day after to-morrow, Mr. Jones," he said, extending his hand.

Burmah accepted it, even as Billings, imperturbable and polite, appeared to answer his call.

"Yes, day after to-morrow, in the late afternoon," Burmah replied, completely at his ease so far as manner went. "Been havin' nice weather for a visit, haven't you? Sorry I can't find time to take you around to my club this evenin', Mr. Conover; but I'm tied up. However, there are other days. Good-by."

That he had no club made no difference to Burmah Jones. He shut the door behind the man from Omaha, and suddenly all his deliberate slowness disappeared, and his air of lazy content dropped from him like the masque it was.

"Ring for a taxi'—quick!" he snapped. "It don't matter who wants to see me. I can't be seen for at least two days. Do what you can without me. Tell 'em you don't know where I've gone, but you think Portland. I've got to get the Port Hatch boat, and have got less than five minutes!"

He jerked a hand-bag from a wardrobe, and ran hastily out through a side entrance and down the stairs, fearing to descend by the elevator lest he should meet his departing visitor. He looked anxiously out into the street for a taxi-cab. He saw one heading his way, but a team obstructed its rush toward the curb, and Burmah, cursing volubly, dashed into the street at the peril of his neck, and pounced on the chauffeur.

"To the Schwabacher dock, as fast as you can drive! I'll pay all fines; but get me there! Quick!"

The driver threw his car around in a hairpin turn, and shot through the crowded streets of the city that forever rushes about its affairs. The car nearly raked a policeman on a corner, and in vain he shouted after it. It bent a fender against a slowly backed truck, but never paused, for Burmah shouted:

"Let it go! I'll pay for it." Everything must make way, and the motor horn blew a wild, continuous warning. By fractions of an inch, they missed a pedestrian or two, and once took to the curb, to avoid collision with a blindered horse. They swung recklessly down to the dock, and Burmah, springing from the door as if thrown violently by someone behind, vented an exclamation of disappointment. Far out in the sound the steamer for Port Hatch churned the water behind, and threw long white furrows under its fore-foot as it turned toward the long neck of land behind which it would soon disappear.

"Here," said Burmah, hastily scribbling on the back of a card, "take this note up to my office, and tell the man at the desk to settle all bills if you get arrested. You know me. I'm Burmah Jones."

The chauffeur bowed in recognition of the name, and climbed into his seat. But, before he had turned his machine, Burmah had plunged into the office of a towing company that stood at the end of the dock.

"I want a tug for Port Hatch—a fast tug—the fastest you've got," he demanded curtly, and the clerk behind the counter, urged to speed by the visitor's dominance, turned to an inner office.

There was no time wasted in bargaining, for Burmah cut that short with:

"Hang the price. Make it, and I'll pay it!"

Burmah was a man to make others move. Inside of fifteen minutes, he stood on board a boat, watching the lines being cast off from the deck, and then, all his impatience concealed, calmly observed the engineer at the engines as if haste meant nothing whatever to him. He had realized the danger while he

listened to Conover's message. If the two men in Port Hatch reached the Colonel first, the latter would certainly either let the land go for an absurd price, or, in some freak of generosity, present them with whatever they wanted, and wish them God's blessing. He must get to the Colonel before a bargain could be clinched, and then pluck that hundred thousand dollars which swung so temptingly before his nose! Once let him get his hands on the money, and everything else could go to smash, so far as one Burmah Jones was concerned. By the side of the cabin he stood and gazed down at the swirl of slow-moving water as the tugboat began to obtain headway. He walked forward, and stared back at the pilot, who stood in the wheel-house above, rough, weather-beaten and watchful. The big gold letters of the boat's name-plate shone brightly, and Burmah hoped that her appellation, *The Hercules*, was a misnomer. He wanted speed, not strength. The pilot seemed in no hurry, but there hung a comforting hope in the cloud of black smoke that began to rush from the smoke-stack, telling that below the firemen were forcing their draughts. He stood quietly while *The Hercules* swung out into midstream. The marvelous harbor, deep enough to float the biggest ship in the world, broad enough to give free-way to a battleship, lay as placid as if it were of glass poured molten into a cup, and left to cool. Wharves and warehouses, mills and factories, bent over the edge of the water. The broad flat, palpitant with industry and the fervid youth of the West, sent its smoky spirals into the sky, thin and gray and pale. Behind all arose the splendid hills, shouldering the residences of the city, and appearing like battlements impregnable to Fate

itself. To one side now, dotted with islands tenanted by industry, were the tide-lands, from which far-seeing men had made fortunes. A slow-moving steamship, huge and black, and laden with argonauts for Alaska, was backing away from her wharf, and those left on the shore were shouting shrill farewell. In the distance, another huge steamer ran up the flag of Japan, telling to the observant that she was preparing to breast the Pacific, and, by holding resolutely to the west, would reach the east. He found time, even in his stress, to think of what it all meant, this marvelous activity, this twisting life, and to see in it resistless, invincible, daring assertion, a dauntless bid for future eminence. This was a city made by men who had been honest builders, men who flaunted as a battle-cry that single pregnant phrase, so truly Western and American, "Boost for Seattle." And here on *The Hercules* was he, the wrecker, whose only shibboleth had been, "Get all you can, and get."

For some reason baffling in its subtlety, but bearing naked comparison, he felt small and mean and ashamed of himself, as he turned away from that sliding panorama, and looked out toward the bow of *The Hercules*, now entering the open waters of the beautiful sound. He shut his teeth savagely, and scowled. This was no time for a man to weaken in such a disreputable enterprise as that in which he was involved. He must cut loose from everything. He must get his clutch on the money of the Omaha Syndicate, and go. Those who were foolish enough to stick to the game, must stick, and pay for their folly.

Away ahead, appearing like a white speck dropped down on the blue waves of Puget Sound, steamed the

Port Hatch boat, carrying the message that might upset all his plans. He looked anxiously up at the stack of *The Hercules,* and the plume of black smoke was still there, exactly as it had been but a few minutes before. It seemed to him that hours had passed since he first observed it. To his impetuous and intolerant mood, the boat seemed to be plodding. A fever of impatience impelled him like a determined horseman to use a spur. He hurried back to the engine-room door, and shouted to the engineer abruptly, all suavity and serenity dropped, and again the man of action.

"Come here!" he commanded; and the engineer, wiping his hands on a piece of waste, obeyed.

"You've got two firemen down there, haven't you?" Burmah asked, crisply.

"One fireman and a coal-passer."

"All right. That makes three of you. You get a hundred dollars a-piece if you beat that other boat into Port Hatch;" and he took from his pocket a fat wallet, and exposed three one-hundred-dollar bills.

"You're on, Boss! I'd bust the boilers for that much money," the engineer answered, and jumped back to impart the news to his men.

Burmah turned immediately, and ran up the short steps to the pilot-house, where without ceremony he jerked open the door. The pilot turned, and scowled at this intrusion, for the pilot-house is sacred, even though the man who enters may be the one who has chartered the boat.

"This boat," said Burmah, "ain't goin' fast enough to suit me. It's speed I want. I want her to hump herself till she cracks her hull. If you beat that boat up yonder into Port Hatch by half an hour, you

get a hundred and fifty dollars for your own pocket. See? Now get a hustle on you, and earn it! I don't want to be all day on this tub. Get busy!

He turned back, and slammed the door behind him, leaving the astonished pilot to speculate as to what urgent business that fat, short, domineering man might have on hand. But there rang the voice of the master and the liberality of one willing to pay for his whims. So the speaking-tubes shrilled, and *The Hercules* began to throb and squat lower in the water, like a foot-racer preparing to get off the mark. The waves commenced to smash up across her up-tilted bow, flushing the forward deck, and cascading from the rope buffer that disfigured her nose. The deck beneath shivered, and the trees along the in-shore, where she ran to find the stillest water, began to slide past more rapidly. *The Hercules* was making the record run of her existence.

The white speck ahead gradually took on a more clear-cut shape, then began to loom distinctly. Next it started to come back toward them in perspective—it came abreast. On the decks of the Port Hatch boat, the passengers crowded to the nearest rail to watch the passing of this sea-going tug that tore the water in a frenzy of haste. *The Hercules*, with her huge engines at full speed, was now a seething, racing thing, recklessly plunging over the water with an uplifted bow, as if run by drunken men; but on her decks none save one or two roustabouts were in sight, for Burmah had discreetly gone to the farther side of the cabin, lest someone should see and recognize him. He must take no chances of arousing inquiry, or curiosity. It was his part to get into Port Hatch, find the Colonel, and influence him before the message

arrived that would set two probably clever men on the trail like hounds on a close quarry. He smiled with satisfaction when, after some minutes had passed, he looked back over the torn wake, and saw that the Port Hatch boat, sedately making her regular schedule, was being dropped behind as if she were tied. He lighted a huge cigar. He had won the first move, and now the break was more than even. He would get Mr. Conover's hundred thousand dollars, unless *The Hercules* blew up or broke down before she finished that desperate spurt. The miles were swimming away behind them, and the persistent clang of the shovels below, feeding coal into the boilers, told that the men in the engine- and fire-rooms were taking every ounce out of the tug that she could stand. Burmah Jones gaily hummed a little song to himself, for the elation of accomplishment had entered his head, and intoxicated him. He felt like shaking hands with himself in congratulation, and wondered if there was not someone on board who had nice strong liquor which he might obtain to drink a toast to himself, the lone passenger on this driven, rocking craft. He was speculating as to which man on the boat would be the most likely to supply this demand, when there came a sudden terrific ear-splitting report from the engine-room, and the sharp crash of rent wood in the superstructure. A cloud of steam belched out through the side doors, and *The Hercules* quivered from bow to stern. The screw stopped revolving, and from the engine-room, with arms held over his face to avoid the white and deadly mist, plunged the engineer, followed in turn by the coal-passer and fireman. The door of the pilot-house flew open violently, and down the steps dove

the pilot, set-faced and swearing steadily in a dull voice. A roar of steam burst from the escape-valve, sending a heavy white cloud upward toward the blue afternoon sky. But, above the noise, Burmah, who had stepped to the rail, prepared to jump overboard, heard the pilot shout:

"What's happened?"

Burmah recovered himself, and hurried after the latter to hear the engineer's reply.

"Blew out a high-pressure cylinder head. Nobody hurt down here."

There was more said, which Burmah could not hear; but he surmised that the pilot was cursing the engineer for over-zealousness to win the reward, and that the engineer was attempting to foist the blame on the fireman, who, in turn, tried to shift it along to the coal-passer.

As suddenly as pandemonium had broken loose, it ceased when the escape-valve, relieved of pressure became silent. *The Hercules* began veering a little wildly as she lost headway, and the pilot ran back to the wheel, and headed her toward the nearest shore, where a tiny cove appeared to offer depth and shelter. Her impetus carried her forward, but the waves no longer dashed against her short nose, and she no longer squatted down in a nest of boiling water. The men from the engine-room had ducked back through the dissipating and cooling clouds of steam, and then, as she began to slow down, with never a quiver of engine nor throb of screw, the shore appeared to be lazily advancing to greet her.

Burmah Jones, after that first excited, frenzied rush, had grown red in the face, and then become desperately grim and quiet, a certain sign that his

mind was exceptionally active. The boat's fore-foot took the sand as gently as if merely touching it for anchorage, and the pilot stepped down from his house to meet the passenger.

"Well," queried the latter, imperturbably, "how bad is it? Do you get that bonus?"

"Bonus? Humph!" replied the pilot, spitting over the rail. "When we get off here we'll be towed off! *The Hercules* is as dead as a salt mackerel."

If he was nothing else, Burmah Jones was capable in misfortune. The Indian's prayer might have been his:

"Oh, Great Spirit, let me win if I can; but, if I can't, make me a good loser."

"You've done your best," he said, quietly. "Luck wasn't with you. I'm going to give you each a piece of money, anyway."

He took from his roll of bills two hundred-dollar notes, crisp and yellow, and thrust them into the hand of the astonished pilot. Nothing in his appearance made the seaman suspect, for a moment, that even then the short, fat donor calculated that he had participated in a game where a hundred thousand dollars were at stake, and that he had lost it all.

"Divide that up with the boys," said Burmah, softly, "and say for me that I wish them joy. We can't always do all we try to do. If we do all we can do, it's only tough luck that can do us, and keep us from doin' others."

CHAPTER XIII.

BRINGS AN HONEST TALE.

The crew of *The Hercules* came in a body to thank the passenger, and found him calmly seated on the winch, with his silk hat on the back of his head, and a bank-book in his hand. He slipped the book into his pocket, as they approached to commiserate with him, and told them that, "it didn't matter, anyhow." After all his surprising desire for haste at the start, this struck them as being the height of politeness, and they stood for a moment wondering what it could all be about. There was something in his attitude that appeared to them unusual, some quiet expectancy—which was exactly the opposite to anything in Burmah's mind; for he was ruminating and philosophizing over something that had come to him, and wanted neither thanks nor conversation.

"Oh, it's all right, boys," he assured them, with a wave of his hand. "How'll we get back?"

"Some tug will come in and pick us up," assured the pilot, looking out toward the sound, which appeared as desolate and primitive as if its waters had never been stirred. And then, as Burmah did not answer, he turned away.

Burmah, with abstracted eyes, stared at the forest. He felt convinced, by all reasoning, that the big sale must be lost, and, therefore, that he was exactly where he had been prior to the hour when Conover appeared in his office with that startling proposition. Yet, somehow, sitting there on the iron seat, with everything quiet and dead around him, with no one

in an outer office to annoy him, and nothing to do but to think, a helpless prisoner on a helpless craft, his mind seemed clearer. He found time and courage for introspection and review. The ethics of his life did not seem good. A careless life it had been, that of the man greedy to acquire much money quickly, without regard for the ethics of the means used in its acquisition. He wondered if he could not have done better with his talents than to employ them as he had. His soul hurt him a little, and, to avoid its bold accusation, for no man can lie to himself, he steeled himself to consider whether it might not be better to go back to Seattle, and depart at once without waiting for anything more. But, always, the things the Colonel had done, the things he had said, the trust of three of the young men from Chattanooga, and the wholesome confidence of Arabella were remembered, and they made him ashamed.

Suddenly, from the wrecked roof of the superstructure through which the cylinder head had torn its way even as a cannon ball perforates the canvas of a target, he heard a shout, and looked up. It was from the pilot who had been inspecting the damage.

"A boat of some sort! Hey! Below there! All hands!"

Burmah listened, but could hear nothing save the sounds of the engineer's voice shouting to his helpers, and their rush of feet as they came out in response to the summons.

"I hear a boat coming, Mister," the pilot roared down from his perch to Burmah. "Maybe we can stop her. Below there! Look lively, and lower away a boat!"

Up to the deck the men sprang, eager to do anything they could in behalf of a passenger who had astonished them by his liberality and his calm acceptance of misfortune, two qualities that are idolized by men of the sea, no matter whither they fare. Burmah Jones lifted his head hopefully, and watched them as they hastened to cast off the lashings, and get the boat over and down the side into the water. There was still a chance, and he gathered himself to take advantage of it, for habit bade him run his race to a finish.

"If it's anyone who can help us, we'll give them word," exclaimed the pilot. "And anyhow, Mister, they will probably be willing to carry you into Seattle." As he spoke he was scrambling into the boat, and preparing to order his men to give way on the oars. But Burmah sprang after him.

"Back to Seattle, if I can't do better," he said. "Pull out into the sound, where we can see what she is."

"Right-o!" declared the pilot; and the oars dipped into the water with a friendly energy. The boat seemed to crawl out past the point of the cove, while the steady puffs of the approaching hope grew rapidly near. Burmah feared that the craft, whatever she might be, would pass before they could intercept her, and then, abruptly, there burst into view another tugboat, headed toward Seattle, and traveling light. The pilot gave a hoarse shout.

"It's *The Mary D.* She towed a schooner out this morning, and is homeward bound!"

He stood up in the boat, balancing himself easily, despite the jerky motion imparted by the oars and the

wash of the sound, and encouraged his men to give way. He waved his cap, and shouted with a voice that sounded sufficiently powerful to be heard at any distance. There was a wavering moment when it was feared they would not be observed or that *The Mary D.* would ignore them; and then, in a hoarse shriek, the tug's whistle told them they had been seen. In a long, graceful swing, she came toward them, and they could hear, across the still waters, the sound of bells in her engine-room calling for slow speed, then speed astern, and she halted within a few feet of them.

"What's the matter, Dan?" the pilot's voice came from above them; and the pilot of *The Hercules* grinned.

"Cylinder head blown out. Got a passenger who wants to get to Port Hatch."

"Sorry! Can't take him!"

Burmah's hopes fell flat.

"Yes, you can, too," shouted the pilot of *The Hercules*. "Lord Almighty! He's in a hurry, and he's a friend of ours. Hang orders. Come on and do this for us, won't you? He's white all the way through."

Burmah's generosity was bearing unexpected fruit.

"You tell them," said Burmah to the man called Dan, "that I'll pay them big to take me aboard, and get me there ahead of the regular boat. I've got to get there!"

The message was bawled upward. The pilot of *The Mary D.* hesitated, looked at his watch, and then slipped it back into his pocket.

"All right, Dan. Get him aboard. I wouldn't do it if it wasn't for you, though. Get him up."

Burmah climbed over the strake of *The Mary D.*, and then turned back to the men of *The Hercules.*

"Thanks," he said. "My name's Jones—Burmah Jones. If what I'm after goes through, I'll not forget a man of you. You can bet your heads on that."

He hurried around to the pilot-house steps, and, as he did so, heard Dan calling to his friend to report the accident to *The Hercules* at her home office that night, then he felt *The Mary D.* starting her screw. This time he made no bargain, but slipped another of the precious yellow bills into the pilot's hands.

"Beat the regular boat in by every foot you can," he said, tersely. "Every minute means money to me. Savvey?"

He ducked back out of the house, and down to the engine-room, where once more he used the greatest wand that magicians can use, the one that is engraved, and the response was as immediate as it had been with the men of *The Hercules.* He walked aft, and waved his hat at the latter in farewell, and looked down the sound. As if relentlessly pursuing him, he saw the regular boat again racing toward them, and she seemed to be going faster than ever. But now, landsman that he was, he discovered something else: that *The Mary D.* was much faster than *The Hercules*, and that the men aboard her were intent on repaying him for his bribes. Again they were racing away from the slow sound boat; again she was dropped from sight. The afternoon sun was waning in a glory of red haze, and the Olympics were donning a purple robe in preparation for the night. That he might lose no time, he went back to the pilot-house and paid for the short charter, after

which he stepped down, and patiently waited for the high headland that would tell him that his race was over.

It was sunset when he leaped to the wharf, and looked around him. He did not stop to think of the changes that had come over Port Hatch since first he landed there. The old temporary wharf had given way to a substantial one, and other wharves were being run out, wharves of stone and concrete, to stay through all time. Two schooners were being unloaded on one hand, and farther up a squatty black tramp freighter was hoisting out her cargo to the accompaniment of a groaning, puffing, steam winch. Electric lights were beginning to shine dully here and there, as they fought for supremacy with the oncoming dusk. A broad, finely paved street zigzagged upward on the side of the cliff toward the lofty top of the peninsula, and everywhere that one might look could be seen the skeletons of buildings in course of erection, buildings being painted, or buildings garish in their new colors. He knew that already the town boasted two taxi-cabs run by a man whom he had induced to see the advantages of having the first cab line in the city; but neither of these was in sight. From a wharf bulletin-board, a big bill stared him in the face, announcing that on the following day there would be a mass-meeting of citizens to organize Port Hatch into a city proper; but this did not halt him. He puffed away up the street, climbing the switchback road, and he did not pause in front of *The Banner* office, althought within he heard the clicking of a linotype machine grinding out Pickett's editorials and the flamboyant articles that he, Burmah Jones, had written under a midnight

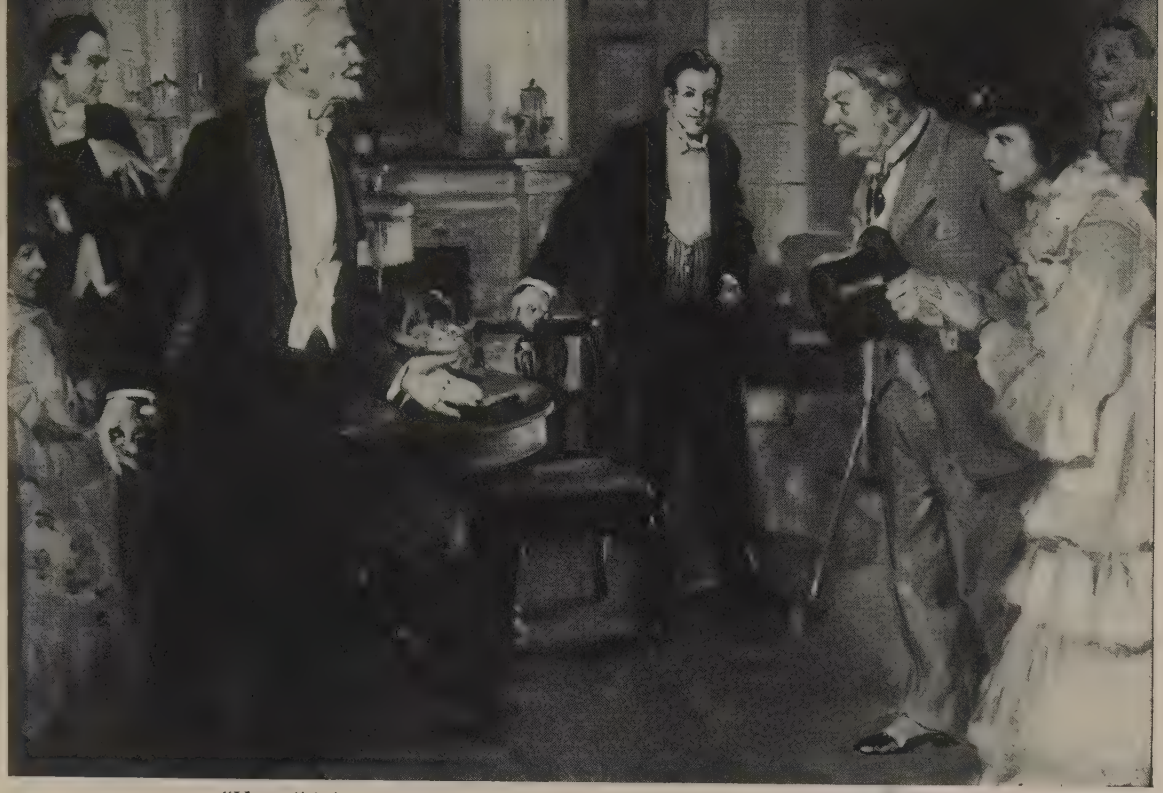
incandescent. He did hesitate for an instant in front of the building, built after the "arts and crafts" beautiful styles, wherein he knew was to be located the Port Hatch Club. He smlied grimly when he thought how he had tried to prevent the Colonel from this extravagance, and how the Colonel had assured him that he had always wanted to be the founder of a club, "devoted to gentlemen, wherein kindly memories might be cherished long after the founder had passed to his rest." Persons were moving homeward through the débris of the streets, carpenters and masons mostly, lured to this city of promise by the certainty of work at boom wages. He was glad that he met no one who recognized him, for what he wanted most of all was to reach the Colonel, talk with him, and then to escape back to the rooms above Hubbard's quarters, one of which was his own for use when in this bubble-creation of his brain.

Out toward the very point of the cliff he made his laborious way, and the shadows were growing more enveloping, and the lights more distant as he advanced. The new palace on the hill, the residence of the Colonel and Arabella, was in a glow, and he wondered what this could mean. Away below him he heard a steamer whistling, and stopped to breathe and look downward and grin, for, after all, he had beaten Conover's message. The emmissaries would have to pay full value when they arrived, that much was certain; and the chances were that he, Burmah Jones, would make enough to justify him in shaking North-western dust from his feet. He hastened onward, and came to huge natural stone pillars, from which wrought-iron gates would swing when they

were placed, and entered the domain of Marquard Villa, as the Colonel, after long consultation with Arabella and the four lawyers from Chattanooga, had named his mansion. On every side, showing through the gloom, were evidences of Hubbard's genius as a landscape artist. Here and there were basins for fountains, and an occasional pedestal for a statue. Trees had been trimmed to meet requirements, and patches of green where new lawns were starting showed soft and inviting in the dusk. Birds twittered when disturbed by the crunching of Burmah's footsteps over the freshly rolled gravel paths. He advanced up the broad and hospital steps, and the smell of fresh paint fought with the odors of evening, and from within the house came the sounds of laughter. He rang the bell, and Uncle Jeff, clad in sedate livery, opened the door with a bow that had done credit to that other home in Chattanooga, so far away. Burmah heard the Colonel's voice through one of the wide grilled openings leading from the fine hallway.

"No, Billy," it expostulated, "don't you try to climb that ladder. There's roses enough there by that cornice. I'd a heap rather have it look scant than to have you bust a leg, and miss this glorious reception."

Then, in a flash, the meaning came to Burmah. This was the fifteenth of August, and the night of the Colonel's house-warming, the reception planned so long and so insistently, which was to do honor to a new Hatch home, and to which Burmah had been invited. Already the sound of Uncle Jeff's announcement of his name was in his ears. He stepped quickly



"You didn't any of you suppose I wouldn't get here for a blow-out like this, did you?"

forward toward the sound, and was merely a placid, unctuous little fat man as he hailed those within the room.

"Good-evening, Colonel, Miss Arabella, and Gentlemen," he said. "Well, I have come, as you can see. Glad to be in time."

"Bless my soul!" shouted the Colonel, boyishly rushing forward to seize and shake his hand. "I knew you would be here. Welcome to Marquard Villa! Isn't it all right, Burmah? Just look at this, will you?"

And Arabella, smiling and glad to see him, caught his hand in both of hers, and said:

"I was afraid you wouldn't spare the time to come. Isn't it lovely? Oh, Mr. Hubbard is such a wonderful man!"

Even Lester, the quiet dawdler, was there, taking his part in the floral decoration of the house; but he alone displayed no happiness at seeing the Kansan, and smiled sardonically, as if suspecting that something besides courtesy had brought Burmah Jones there at that hour—or at all. It was he who looked at his watch, and then said, in surprise:

"Why, the boat must have got in early."

"No, it didn't," quietly retorted Burmah, facing him with a hard stare, as if appreciating the fact that this stranger was too shrewd to be congenial. "I missed it and hired a tug-boat. You didn't any of you suppose I wouldn't get here for a blow-out like this, did you?" Lester did not answer. "Well, I should say not!" declared Burmah, answering himself.

"Of course, I knew it!" gallantly asserted the

Colonel. "You-all might know that my friend Burmah wouldn't neglect an important occasion where Miss Arabella and I are concerned. No, Sire-e-e! Had supper? No? Sally! Oh, Sally! Jeff! Go tell Aunt Sally to get somethin' for Mr. Jones to eat. Hurry up, now. Lord, Burmah! You-all must be mighty near starved!"

Already Arabella had tripped out of the room to act as hostess, and now the Colonel himself led the way up the broad stairs to a chamber to dispose of his guest.

"Where's your grip, Burmah?" he asked, as he turned into the most spacious room in the new house.

"Lost it on the dock," unblushingly lied Burmah.

"I've done that myself," said the Colonel comfortingly. "But you won't need it, anyhow. Why, bless you, Man, I've got hair-brushes and night-shirts, and slippers and—say—I've got an extra dress-suit and shirt!"

That he was more than six feet tall, and nearly as thin as a lath, while Burmah was four times as big around and considerably shorter, did not put him out of countenance at all in this hospitable offer. But he had no time to say more, for now was Burmah's chance, and time was precious.

"It's possible, Colonel," he said, ignoring the proffer of the dress-suit, but concealing any anxiety, "that two men will come to Port Hatch to see you about buying land for a subdivision. One of them is named Wellington, and the other, Frank something. I've forgotten the name. They are from Omaha, and—"

"They've already been up here to see me," said the Colonel, and Burmah's hopes dropped to zero. Everything in that moment seemed lost. Conover's partners had anticipated his message.

"When was that?" he asked, his voice exposing his stress.

"To-day, Sir," answered the Colonel. "And I told 'em I couldn't talk business of any sort to-day, because I was helping Miss Arabella to fix up the house, and was right busy. I invited them to the reception, and they said they'd come. Right nice gentlemen they were, too!"

Burmah was relieved. It flashed through his mind that perhaps he could explain, to drive away suspicion in case Conover ever entertained any, that he had forgotten the reception, and had come on a private boat, and disregarded all business, that he might not disappoint so great a man as the Colonel. The way was clearing by leaps and bounds.

"Well, Colonel," he said, "I'm glad you talked to them. You are a wonder for doin' things. I thought I was goin' to bring you some good news, and here, just as usual, you beat me to it."

His voice was doleful, expressing disappointment that he could not have carried out a big transaction without the Colonel's aid; and the latter hastened to comfort him.

"Beat you? No, Sir. It's just that faculty that comes from commercial training. I do seem sort of gifted in that way. Whenever a gentleman plunges into business, Sir, he succeeds, if he is industrious. Now, about these gentlemen, I reckon we must be liberal with them. They appear to be

just the kind of men we should encourage to come to this city, which is sure to become the highest in its ideals of any city in the world. Hubbard is a great man."

He waved his arms, and his eyes glowed with enthusiasm. His youth seemed to have returned to him, and to have lent its glow to his white cheeks; but of these attractions Burmah was oblivious.

"Maybe I had better attend to the deal, Colonel," he said. "You are wearin' yourself out with all these details. It's about all one man can do to make Port Hatch a real city, without botherin' his head over the little things."

"That's so," said the Colonel, with a sigh. "I do get right tired, badgering my brains over what to do, and what not to do. I'd be right obliged to you, Burmah, if you would just take charge of the whole affair."

"Then," said Burmah, lightly, "when they come to you, you just tell them that you have given me authority to go ahead and close the deal on whatever terms I think best."

"Thank you! Thank you, Sir, for helping me out so much. I'll do it!" said the Colonel, intent on hastening back to finish his decorations. "That settles that! Come down when you get ready. Oh, yes, those brushes!"

He came back and deposited them on the dresser, while Burmah was splashing his face in the adjoining bath-room, and then hurried down the stairs to where the laughing voices, jests and exclamations still told of the presence of those from Chattanooga, and of the quiet Lester. When the Kansan joined

them, the Colonel and Arabella met him and escorted him to the dining-room, and, hardened as he was, Burmah Jones enjoyed the thrill of the girl's hand on his arm, her caress of friendly familiarity. That the Colonel sat with him at the table lest he should be alone, a guest in the house, also furnished food for thought; and, beyond that, as he ate, with his serviette tucked carefully beneath his double chin, there was somehow an envy of those characteristics of gentility which he had overlooked. The candles on the table, glowing from candlesticks that had been in the Hatch family for hundreds of years, the tasteful arrangement of flowers, the service itself, the neatness of the quiet maid, the soft drawl of the Colonel's voice, forever voicing his dreams of a great city—all, everything, filled the wanderer with a vague melancholy. It was as if admonitory voices, soft and insistent as the rustling of fall breezes through the tamaracks, whispered accusations. Somewhere from his desultory reading, accidental, not habitual, the compulsory reading of idle hours in railway trains, or hotel parlors, came that gleaning of the duty of one to another when he has eaten of the other's salt; that the worst of crimes was betrayal after hospitality. And now it began to appear to his conscience that he was eating of the salt while his heart premeditated treachery. He heard the soft clamor of a door-bell, and presently Uncle Jeff came into the room, and addressed the Colonel, who looked a question at him from beneath his heavy white eyebrows.

"It's dem musikans, Sah," said Jeff. "Dey's done come on de steamboat, an' dey wants to know whah dey's to git ready."

The Colonel hastily excused himself, with apologies, and passed out of the room. Out in the hallway, Burmah could hear his hearty voice.

"Right out here, Gentlemen! Right out here on the terrace, so that the music can come softly through the big windows. Right out here on the terrace amongst these palms. The palms are to hide your lamps, gentlemen, and to keep you-all from being interrupted. Music is a divine art. It's something that has to be born in men. It makes them better. It boosts them up."

His voice died away as he took his especially employed Seattle orchestra out to some invisible terrace, and bustled around to see that they were properly accommodated. Burmah seized the moment to escape from the dining-room and up the stairs, where he tried to make himself as presentable as possible, and found occasion to regret that he had not remembered the reception, and bought himself a dress-suit. He resolved that this would be the first purchase he made on his return to Seattle, and that never, thereafter, would he travel anywhere without one. He sat for a long time in brooding contemplation of his tan shoes, until summoned to the door by a gentle tattoo. He opened it to find Arabella, radiant in a simple evening gown, awaiting him. She looked up at him with an affection in her eyes that stabbed him, so introspective had been his mood.

"I want the honor of going down on your arm, Mr. Jones," she said. "You see, you are like one of our own family, and Father told me he would forego the pleasure, even though he might have to fight you afterward."

Embarrassed, he permitted her to lead him down the stairway. Already the musicians were playing their first piece, and out through the open doors in front of the mansion he saw that lamps had been lighted, stretching away toward the entrance to Marquard Villa, and that the guests were beginning to arrive. Arabella placed him at her side, ignoring for the moment the attentive quartet from Chattanooga, and now, for the first time, Burmah observed that Lester, too, seemed to have fallen under her spell. Burmah stood awkwardly, striving to imitate the graceful bow of the Colonel, and suffering introductions. Most of the men who came he had met before. Many of them he had regarded as victims. To some of the women he had been introduced—brave women coming as pioneers with the men by whom they stood steadfast, and never until that moment at the door had he entertained pity for any of them. They greeted him as a friend, and all were happy. In flocks the Colonel led them through the palace of folly, built nobly on a noble site, costing double what Hubbard had inteded it to cost, and embellished with furniture that had been collected through generations by gentlemen and gentlewomen. Proudly the Colonel pointed to the paintings; proudly he gave interesting bits of history connected with some of his family heirlooms. And always he sought out Burmah Jones to repeat to him, and always he made his guests feel that Burmah Jones was a great and refined man, partner in enterprise, partner in honesty. There were some there garbed as informally as was Burmah himself, and that helped to

put him at his ease. Others were there who appeared to receptions born, and everywhere, strive to escape as he might, he heard the glowing enthusiasm of the builders, their marvelous faith, their splendid loyalty to the city that they were creating.

"When the railway comes!" The homes were being erected on that foundation. The money was being confidently poured forth on that basis. And Burmah Jones, alone of all those there, knew that it was a lie, a mere hopeless figment from his own unscrupulous imagination. Women, motherly and charming, came to him, and talked about it. Men, eager for the latest news, sought him out for advice. Hubbard, arriving late, and looking worn by work, and yet bright-eyed in his ambition, hurried to greet him as a friend. Little Billy got him alone to pour tales of the latest prospects for sales, and even Kirby hopefully stated that before long he would establish a record for examining titles, and that he had already made arrangements to buy several lots for Little Billy. There was a flood of happenings of which he had not learned, so engrossed had he been in the task of separating men from their money. The new hotel had been opened for three days now, and it boasted a fine grill-room. The school-house which the Colonel had donated, would be completed next week, and Hubbard had found two wandering architectural draughtsmen to assist him, and the Colonel had employed them. The Todds were going to open a general merchandise store, and they had given out a contract for a building, suggested by Hubbard, that was to be a marvel of taste.

This was an end to his work that Burmah had not seen or given thought to. All he knew was that he had sold lots, and lied as seemed best for his purpose, and stuck to his Seattle offices, and let the Colonel spend his share of the money as he chose. It was none of Burmah's business if that "nice old feller wanted to blow in every cent as fast, and faster than he got it. Made business better, anyhow. Poor old chump!"

But, now, Burmah discovered something that had not appeared to him before, that when the end came, as it must, these men and women around him, more than two hundred in all, would lose something beside their money; they would lose a little of their faith in humanity, and in him most of all. Wholesale robbery, he knew it to be. Oddly enough, it was the elder of the Todds who brought this full meaning home a little closer than any of the others, when that lanky individual had cornered him as he stood alone on the terrace, trying to escape from those within—and himself.

"Pretty, ain't it?" said Todd, ungainly, and looking awkward in his "store clothes," as he sat down by Burmah.

Burmah merely grunted.

"Yes, Sir, it's fine," Todd went on, unrebuffed, as if confident that he was talking to one congenial. "'Tain't so nice, sometimes, as back where we come from, it seems to me; but maybe that's because I ain't used to high mountains like these. Jim and me hated to leave home when we come out here. We'd worked so hard, though, that we thought we'd just naturally have to do something to git ahead.

You see, we got so many to think about! Jim's been a widower for nigh on to seven years, and he's got four little shavers. Then it did seem as if our family had the worst luck. There were five brothers of us, and all married. I'm the oldest. I never married. I sort of had to drag the other boys up, and a sister too, after Paw and Maw died. Then the others had bad luck. Two of the brothers died trying to save a woman floatin' down the Mizzouri when they was a flood. Then the other one, Tom, just worked himself to death, and he left us, and he was the only one that had made any money. He turned his family, a widder and four babies, over to me. 'Will,' he says, when he lay there gaspin' for breath, and coughin', 'send 'em all out of the room.' So they all went, and we was alone. 'Will,' he says, reachin' over and gettin' hold of my hand, 'look after 'em, won't you? Keep the wolves away from the fold. Help 'em to grow up and be decent, and honest and truthful. I want 'em to be real men and women, Will, the kind that never do anything they need be ashamed of; so they can look other folks, and God Himself, in the face without droppin' their eyes. They don't any of 'em, and my wife least of all, know anything about how to take care of what little I've got.' Then his voice got hoarse, and he couldn't talk for a while, and just whispered; and, when I bent over to see if he was still talkin' to me, he was prayin' in his way, and sayin', 'Lord I s'pose it's writ in the books that I'm to be took away, and so I don't ask nothin' for myself, no forgiveness, no nothin'; only this, Lord, that you

make my brother Will a good shepherd for my flock. Show him how, because it's mighty dark, and we can't seem to see, and—' That was all. He'd gone out over that same dark road, and I was left there alone, the shepherd."

The orchestra stopped its playing; but neither of them noticed it—neither William Todd, whose weather-beaten, gnarled, hard-worked hands had twisted themselves together on the railing, nor Burmah Jones, whose head had dropped low on his breast, and who was sprawled out with his hands in his pockets.

"I don't know why I should tell you all this, Mister Jones," the plaintive voice went on, "except that I want to thank you—for both me and my brother—for helpin' us along the way you have. We borrowed the money to come out here to start with from men that didn't have much, but believed in us, and let us have what they could spare. We knew by the way you was doin' things that at last it was our chance. We saw Port Hatch goin' right ahead, and began to make more money than we'd ever thought of. So, when we needed more to pay our bills because we'd sort of reached out too far, I knew it was all right, and I've taken everything that was left by Tom, and put it, too, into our new building. That's all going to be theirs—Tom's children's and his widow's—and I'm goin' to try and run it for them so that when they come they'll be happy, and be brought up right, and so that poor Tom, if he sees me, will look over it all, and know that I've kept faith, and that I've been a good shepherd for his flock. And,

Mister Jones, the Colonel's all right; but Jim and me has talked it over, and knows that it's most all due to you, and so we said that, whenever we got the chance, we'd tell you about it, and thank you. I'm thankin' you now!"

He put out one of his harsh hands, and Burmah was compelled to accept it, and compelled to look into the overflowing eyes that sought his through the light filtering between the palms. The hand grasped his in unrestrained friendliness, and the eyes expressed a great gratitude. Burmah suddenly got to his feet, and fled from the terrace, speechless and ashamed. He found the guests broken into groups, and thought he might slip unobserved up-stairs; but Arabella captured him just as someone shouted, "Speech! Speech from the Colonel!"

The Colonel, nothing loath, and beaming with infinite friendliness upon all those in the room, stood beneath a huge cut-glass chandelier that had been sent him from the old Marquard plantation as a present for his new house, and gracefully assumed an oratorical pose.

"Neighbors and Friends," he said, "it is with an overflowing heart that I have welcomed you to-night, to a new home of yours and of mine in the far North-west. It is, what you see, a step in the direction of art and comfort combined. Its conception is due to one of the greatest genuises of this, or any other century, the man we are all proud of, the man who is making our city the most perfect of its kind in the world, Mr. Hubbard."

He paused while his hearers applauded, and

Hubbard blushed, and looked wild-eyed, and threatened to bolt.

"It has the distinction of being the first attempt at real home-building in what is to be a city of which we shall be proud. Other homes may be built here, far more pretentious, more elaborate, costing more; but in none of them can the hearthstone wax warmer, or the heart of the stranger be more free than in this. We who are here to-night, are pioneers, in truth, bringing a greater victory than that which is led by the bugle and the drum, the victory of peace. Behind the charges of the bugle, the drum, and the shining steel, is a pathway of white faces, turned silently toward the pitiless skies, and the mark of attempt is a battle-flag planted, ephemerally, on the trodden, desolated field. Back of our advance, silent, save for the ring of the axe, and peaceful, save for our own hurried industry, are no pitiful sacrifices to havoc and ruin, and the momument of our endeavor is the home. We are a little army, and we come, not to destroy, but to upbuild, to utilize, to beautify. We are an army of ideals, exalted by the spiritual desire to create for ourselves a city that shall, in its home and civic life, shine as an example of what an American city may be when founded by Americans, and clinging undeviatingly to the clean spirit of our nation. Port Hatch is not, and shall not be, a city of individual effort, but of united aim. We are not brothers in blood, but we are a family of heart, each individual working for others as cheerfully as for himself, and each pouring his talents on the altar of Port Hatch. Nor shall we fail

to achieve the ideal, for we are founded on that rock of all ages, Honesty! There is no man connected with Port Hatch, thank God! who has an ulterior motive in his heart. There is none who is not fighting for the beauty of the ideal."

Burmah lifted his eyes from the floor where he had held them to conceal the sardonic, cynical twinkle that flooded them despite his desire to appear sincere, and they came straight to meet those of Lester, standing near at hand, and Lester's eyes bored him through with a calm, merciless appraisal under which his own again dropped, as the Colonel continued, with fervor.

"Two distinctions have been mine," said the Colonel, in his soft, musical voice, "one, undeserved, that the city has been named after my family; and the other, seized, that Marquard Villa is the first home on this beloved peninsula. If I do nothing else in my life, if I bequeath nothing more, I shall endeavor to be worthy of that gentleman who died penniless, his ancestral home burdened by mortgages, whose heirs discovered that his total possessions were the garments he wore and the key to the house that no longer might shelter him and those he had loved. But engraved upon this key was that which made it a heritage, that which read, 'For friends—at all times.'

"Financial ability is an acquired and cultivated talent. Any gentleman, if he turns his attention to commercial pursuits, may achieve financial success; but to comprehend the signficance of the scroll upon the key left by the dead man, is of far greater value to those of the world than to leave behind

millions of dollars to be scattered. And now I wish to emphasize the meaning I expressed in the statement that we of Port Hatch are, and shall be, as those of one family. I wish you all to follow me."

He bowed, turned and led the way out through the doors opening on the terrace. The moon had arisen from behind the mountains that sheltered Port Hatch, and rendered the night bright. Straight out to the end of the house walked the Colonel, until he stood where the terrace, in a curve, hung over the sheer face of the cliff. Full three hundred feet below, the waters of the sound lapped softly against the unyielding rock, and the gentle waves, racing in procession, were all plumed with silver. In the far distance old Puget was a mirror for the night. Against the horizon a high peak, bearing everlasting snows, lifted itself toward the stars, wearing its shining mantle with a dignity all its own. The sounds of the orchestra from the far end of the terrace were subdued, soft and warm, as the Colonel's guests, trooping after him, paused in quiet expectancy, and to them, too, the moon was kindly, as she showered her light over the soft, bared shoulders of women, upon their hair, and upon their brows, caressing them. She lent grace to the men, whether they were garbed in conventional evening dress, or in plain business suits. She threw a halo around the shining white hair of Colonel Hatch, and illumined his fine, gentle face, as he lifted his hand and again spoke.

"Friends, this shall be the formal dedication of our home, that we have opened to you all, to-night, and shall symbolize the truth that its doors shall never be locked."

He held aloft a shining key, fresh from the mint, poised it for a moment, then hurled it far out to fall into the waters of the sound, and the arc of its flight was like the dim, whirling light of a comet on its path to extinction. The Colonel threw his arms wide in a broad gesture, as if expressing the wish that he might take everything, his guests, his home, Port Hatch, the cherished ground on which he stood, even the rugged old mountains, to his heart, and those who watched him, fascinated by his kindly peculiarities, stood for a moment, and then rushed upon him to congratulate. Arabella came first, and clasped her arms around his neck; and he held her very close, and drank the glory of her eyes, which met his with proud affection. Lester, big and thoughtful, stood at the edge of the terrace, and watched them for a moment, and there was something in his attitude that centered the attention of Burmah Jones, who stood farther back. There was a certain poise in Lester that Burmah thought he had not observed before, some suggestion of strength, some hint of class, place and power, which was scarcely in keeping with one who, so far as any knew, was merely a gentlemanly dawdler tenting on the beach. As if feeling Burmah's stare, Lester suddenly turned and looked at him, and then went toward him. His face was grave and unsmiling, his gray eyes unwavering and his brows slightly contracted, as he looked squarely into the Kansan's face.

"Jones," he said, meaningly, in a low voice, distinct and cutting, "I should think you would be damned well ashamed of yourself!"

And, before Burmah could recover, Lester had

"This shall symbolize the truth that its door shall never be locked."

passed deliberately onward and into the brilliantly lighted drawing-room. For an instant, Burmah flushed, took a step as if to follow Lester, and then halted. He was not afraid of anything in the world; but he knew with absolute certainty that the strange idler had fathomed him and all his motives with disturbing keenness, and, also, that Lester was not one at whom he dared snap his fingers. He wavered as to what course he should take, and in that moment of wavering Arabella saw him, hastened to him, put both hands on his arm with a caress, and smiled at him.

"I wonder," she said, softly, "if you know how much we all think of you—how we appreciate what you have done for all of us—how great a credit we give you for your work! Mister Jones, my father, the boys, Mister Hubbard—all of us—love you!"

Her words, each a thrust, stabbed home, and he could but mumble and make an excuse to escape. He asked her to bid the Colonel good-night for him, claiming weariness and a wish to retire, and then slipped hurriedly away, and sought the back stairs. Failing to find them, he passed almost furtively through the dining-room, out into the hallway and upward. He closed the door of his room behind him, and stepped out upon the balcony that hung beneath his window. This position gave him a view of the mushroom city, with its spread of buildings under construction showing like yellow skeletons of gold in the moonlight, its completed buildings softened to an appearance of age by the shadows, the wharves stretching out like tentacles, the ships moored by them and the piles of lumber over on

the flat from which other buildings would be erected. It was all his, a creation of his unscrupulous brazenness. All those below were his victims, even to that fine old man whom he had used as a decoy. He had made and kept money, the one thing for which he sought, and was even then on the verge of what he conceived to be the ultimate victory; and yet he stood there stockily, and cursed himself, the day he was born, the day he had met Colonel Hatch, and his whole misspent life. For an instant, he thought, wildly of going back below, calling everyone around him, and saying boldly:

"I have defrauded you—all! There is no punishment too great for me; but, as I am beyond punishment by law, I shall punish myself. I shall be the executioner of Burmah Jones." Then he would walk out to the end of the terrace and leap over it into the waters far below. Yet, that would do those who had trusted him, and believed in him, no good. He had gone too far to recede. He must steel himself to play the game through to the end, as he had started; but he swore to himself that when he did leave, abandoning those behind to the misfortunes of their folly, he would go far away, and begin life over on a plan of inflexible rectitude. He returned to his room, darkened it, and, before he climbed into bed, shut all the windows tight, striving to bar out the sounds of the voices of those whom he had recklessly despoiled.

CHAPTER XIV.

AND THE KNAVE FIGHTS.

Burmah Jones a week later walked slowly and thoughtfully between the big pillars leading to the Marquard Villa, and paused to stare at two men who were working with careful deliberation, and "soldiering" qualities manifest, over what presumably would some time be a huge, ornamental flower-bed. Their laziness annoyed him, and he wished that he were the boss around that place for about five minutes, long enough, anyway, to discharge the two offenders, and kick them off the premises.

"Skaggs and Flay! Humph! Fishermen they were, and now they're landscape gardeners, working for that slob, Hubbard, who wants to build a flower-pot on every lamp-post," he mumbled to himself. "Nobody but the Colonel would have such trash hangin' around. I s'pose by this time he always refers to 'em as his very dear friends, and that they borrow his money!"

He trudged on toward the residence, where, but a week before, he had endured the pangs of a newborn conscience, and climbed the steps toward the open doors, to be met by Uncle Jeff, who regarded him as perhaps the greatest man living—next, always, to Colonel Alonzo Fairfax Hatch, "of the Hatches of Tennessee, Sah!" The prophet, Moses, had he stepped out of the clouds, would have been next, always, in the same way, to the same Colonel Hatch, in Jeff's estimation.

"Good mawnin', Sah, Kunnel Jones," said Jeff, bending far over several times, and scratching his feet

on the polished floor of the hall. "Ah reckon de Kunnel spectin' you-all to-day, Sah. He'll shoah be mighty glad to see you, though. He done told me whenever you come, Sah, to bring you right to the library, Sah, whah he's workin'. He's been a mighty busy gemman, Sah, since dey elect him Mayor of dis city, Sah."

Burmah wondered what would make the Colonel busy, and followed through the house to the library, which had, already, under the direction of Arabella, become a cozy, homelike place of infinite rest and comfort. As he passed through the door, the Colonel arose from a desk that was littered with papers, scrawled over in his crabbed, punctilious hand, and laid his glasses on the last sheet.

"Why, Burmah!" he shouted effusively, and with delight at sight of his lieutenant shining from his eyes. "I didn't expect to see you to-day; but I told Jeff that, whenever you came, at any hour of the day or night, you were always to be brought right straight to me. I'm mighty glad to see you. Maybe you can lend me your asistance. I'm preparing a very important and historical document."

"And what's that?" demanded Burmah, as he dropped into a chair.

"Well, you see it's this way," said the Colonel, with great gravity. "At the mass-meeting when we organized, I was unanimously elected Mayor of Port Hatch. Quite an honor, Sir, to be the first Mayor of this city. I appreciate to the full my responsibilities. Mine is an epoch-making term of office; so I thought, don't you see, that I ought to make a sort of proclamation, or address, or something like that, the same way Presidents do when

they take office. Only, this is a Mayor's message. Mr. Picket has kindly consented to run it on the front page of *The Banner*, and has sent to Seattle to get a right-big cut of an eagle with screamin' wings, that will go clean across the top of the page for this momentous issue. Also, I told him to have five thousand extra copies printed, so my message could be sent away to those friends of mine that might want to read it, and to sell to the many folks that will be interested, hereafter—after I am gone—in my views and utterances."

Burmah sat staring at him in open-mouthed astonishment, and suppressed a rising desire to laugh when he saw that the Colonel actually took himself as seriously as if the fate of nations depended on his views. The proclamation of a Cæsar had no more weight in the eyes of the Colonel than this first address of his as Mayor of Port Hatch. Burmah straightened himself with a jerk, when he saw that the Colonel had picked up the first sheet, and threatened to read the entire manuscript through.

"I'd like to hear it, Colonel," he said, "only that I've got a lot of things to talk about."

He reached in his pocket, and drew out a closely folded slip of paper. His pudgy hands unfolded it with a quick motion, and he threw it on the desk before the financier from Chattanooga.

"There," he said quietly, "is the bank's receipt for fifty thousand dollars placed to your credit. I have taken fifty thousand for myself."

"Quite right, Burmah! Quite right," said the Colonel; and then, as it dawned on him that he had fifty thousand dollars in cash all at one time:

"Most amazin'! Most amazin' what a gentleman can do when he starts in to conquer the financial world."

"I got better terms than I thought I could, from Conover," Burmah went on. "Him and his pardners agree to pay us fifty thousand more at the end of six months, and another fifty at the end of the year."

The Colonel stared out of the window, as if fascinated by some object in the distance.

"Also," said Burmah, in the same quiet voice, "I have decided that it's best for me to be here all the time. I've brought my trunk up with me. I've got the Seattle office runnin' like clock-work, and Billings is a good man. Folks are goin' to come here, after this, more than they are to Seattle. I'm goin' to see it through, right here, Colonel."

The Colonel did not appreciate the renunciation that was conveyed in the Kansan's last words, for he had never suspected that Burmah Jones had any other course in his mind; yet that announcement had cost the latter sleepless nights and the uprooting of old methods.

"We may not do all we expected to, and we may fall down at the end of the race," continued Burmah; "but, Colonel, we'll run it out, straight and fair, even if we drop dead at the finish."

Something in his tone attracted the Colonel's interest, and he looked a question, but Burmah's eyes did not waver from their habitual steady stare.

"And, Colonel," Burmah went on in that same controlled voice, "I've got just one favor to ask, because I think I'm better able to handle real-estate than you are, and that is that, no matter who comes

to you, no matter what person asks you to make a deal, you will turn it over to me. If they ask you when the railroad is comin' here, I want you to tell 'em to come to me. Tell 'em you don't know. You don't! Neither do I; but I'm the one, after this, that's goin' to do all the explanation work. If, by bad luck, she never comes, they'll have no one to blame but themselves, and they won't be able to say that Burmah Jones, or Colonel Hatch, ever hooked them into it by a lie."

He was annoyed by the Colonel's absent-mindedness, for the latter, long before the close of the speech, was again gazing dreamily out of the window. And he answered Burmah as if he had but half-heard, assenting, as usual, to any arrangement that might be made.

"That's right good of you, Burmah, to take so much work off my shoulders. I'll give you advice whenever you need it, and I'll send them all to you, if they come to me. I'm right glad you made this last deal, because I've got a right-smart need for the money. I'm studyin' mighty hard whether gray or blue would be the best colors for uniforms for the police force, and whether or not Skaggs and Flay would make good officers of the law. They do aggravate me sometimes!"

Burmah got up, as near to being in a hopeless rage as he ever got, and clapped his hat on his head.

"If I were you," he said, turning toward the door, "I'd have 'em pink!"

"Pink? Pink?" queried the Colonel, arising to show him out, "I never thought of that! I think I'll ask Hubbard about it."

Out at the door, he recalled the statement that

Burmah was going to make his headquarters in Port Hatch.

"Of course," he said, "you sent your trunk here, Burmah?"

"No, Colonel; I think it's better for me to take the rooms over the offices."

The Colonel's face expressed great disappointment.

"Why, Burmah!" he declared, his voice expressing hurt amazement. "When we built Marquard Villa, Arabella and I pointed to the room on the plans that we were to call the Burmah room! It's the one you slept in the other night. If that room doesn't suit you, you can have any one in the house. You can have two, if none of 'em are big enough."

As usual, Burmah's adroit wits found a way to compromise.

"S'pose you just keep that same room for me, Colonel," he said, "and as soon as I can get around to it, I'll come up and fill it. I'd do it now; only, while this rush is on, I guess I ought to be down there where I can talk to customers nights, if they happen to come in late."

The Colonel did not seem sufficiently impressed. Burmah promptly adopted another tact. He swelled his chest with something of his old time flamboyant air, and held his finger aloft in the manner of the man who said, "There is hope," and spoke with great decision.

"This is no time for us to jib at the jumps. Colonel, me and you are making the most glorious city that has ever been kicked into existence. It must be Port Hatch, first, last, and all the time. Everything must be sacrificed to Port Hatch! You

are furnishin' all the brains, and me the executive work. Until we can get her ahead a leetle mite further, I've got to be close on the job. They ain't nothin' in the world would suit me so much as to come up here to live, but I've just got to stick down there for a while, till Port Hatch is recognized as the Queen City of the North-west."

The Colonel, touched on the tender spot, arose to the occasion.

"Burmah, I beg your pardon, Sir, for having seemed trying to deflect you from our manifest duties. It is most commendable that you are a man who follows an undeviating line toward an ideal. You make me feel ashamed of myself, Sir, and proud to be associated with such a man as you; but no other man shall ever sleep in the Burmah room, be he King, or President, until you come to take it as your own. My hand, Sir!"

He walked as far as the gate, extracted a promise from Burmah to call that evening, and then, his message to the people forgotten, began admiring some roses on bushes that had been brought, at considerable expense, from Tennessee. Burmah trudged slowly and thoughtfully along the road, stopping in front of every building and pile of lumber, and scrutinizing each. His tabulated memory instantly recalled each owner, and the detail of each sale. Here was a residence being built by a man who had told him that he was merely taking a gamble on the railway's reaching Port Hatch. Here was another one where he had told the purchaser that the railway was a positive certainty, and he began to think how many such cases there might be in the mushroom city. He flinched mentally as he

thought apprehensively of the time when all these individuals would realize that, if they had not been actually tricked into buying land, and squandering money thereon, they would at least be in a position to call the men back of Port Hatch pitiable fools and unworthy of credence. But he set his heavy jaws grimly, and scowled, and clung to the resolution so hardly arrived at: that, no matter what befell, he, Burmah Jones, would be there at the end, and would face the music. He stopped at the head of Main Street, and scanned it, and half-reluctantly admitted that there must be something in Hubbard more than he had believed possible; for there was harmony in the architecture of the business buildings that were creeping along toward the distance, and a new note, too, for Hubbard had adopted the uniformity of a quaint old English style. For the sake of the advertising value, Burmah had permitted him to be the sole arbiter of what should be built on that model street, and had inserted, sometimes after great argument, such a clause in every deed of sale. The overhanging balconies, with flower-boxes laden with color, the pitched roofs, redly stained, the quaint signs, all lent the street a charming individuality.

"If only there had been a railway!" Burmah sighed to himself, as he turned toward the building that was to be his workshop and his home.

His first act was to get every scrap of advertising copy that was to be sent out, and carefully, painstakingly, he minimized that portion bearing on the railway. He knew that this must not be too sharply done, lest it attract attention. His campaign was already outlined in his own mind, and he proposed,

by gradual steps, to eliminate everything except the bare suggestion that the Transcontinental road might possibly make Port Hatch its terminal, while at the same time boosting, with might and main, the artistic and home features of the new town. This task done, he opened his mail, and, first of all, seized the envelopes from clipping-bureaus to which he had subscribed and from which he had ordered everything that appeared in the papers pertaining to the progress, or financing, of the A. & O. Railway. Rapidly he scanned the clippings, and one by one, with a grunt of satisfaction, threw them aside into a pile. Work on the railway had not stopped, but was seemingly being rushed faster than ever, and the financial news intimated that the unknown capitalists behind the enterprise were Englishmen, seeking to outdo the lines of Canada, and that possibly the road would soon veer northward. He smiled sceptically at this, for there was not the slightest doubt in his mind that this was a road being built by American interests, and that the terminus would be Seattle. There were reports of surveying parties being seen here and there in the far West, and steadily approaching the borders of the State of Washington. Once they entered the State, the downfall of Port Hatch was imminent. A fake surveying party, running lines across the State from one of the true A. &. O. surveys would help for a time, if it ran a line through to Port Hatch. That must be attended to. Already, he began casting over in his mind the names of friends in the East, old confidence operators like himself, who could be depended upon to employ such a surveying party, and start it out, and at the same

time preserve the secret. There was Diamond Bill, who had operated the Omaha. The last Burmah had heard of him he was somewhere on the New Jersey coast, promoting a process for getting gold out of the sea waves. Bill might attend to the survey matter for him; but he would want a big slice of money for the job. There was Deacon Wills, whose specialty was selling fake mining stock to church congregations, but heaven only knew where the Deacon could be found. There was the Count Mareschal de Benoit, known in private as Bill Slack; but the Count, unfortunately, was doing a five-year sentence in a Federal prison. Habit held the active brain of Burmah in its spell for a long time, and he walked backward and forward the length of his room, in an aimless effort to think who best would serve his purpose. He paused in front of the window, with hands in his pockets, and hat pulled down over his eyes, just as a man passed along the street. In the heavy gait of the overworked, the awkward swing of the muscle-bound arms, and the bent shoulders, Burmah recognized the elder Todd, the man who had taken upon himself the burden of caring for the helpless, and Jones suddenly whirled back from the window, and brought one fat fist smashing into the other palm.

"It's crooked! It's plumb crooked!" he muttered, emphatically. "The railway won't come here; but, if it does, or it don't, I'm goin' to play the game as square as I can from now on. I'm through fakin', if it kills me!"

Angry with himself for ever having wavered, he tramped down the stairs and into Hubbard's office. Here he found the engineer going over some plans

that had just been submitted by one of the hired architects.

"What's that?" demanded Burmah, glancing over Hubbard's shoulder at something that looked like a miniature Greek temple.

"The new City Hall we are to build," said the author of the "City Beautiful."

Burmah's lips parted, and he drew in his breath.

"Who's doin' that?" he asked, although guessing the answer.

"Colonel Hatch is donating it to the city," replied Hubbard.

"Humph! I might have known it," said Burmah, looking at the drawing. "And how much will that cost him?"

"Probably a little less than fifteen thousand dollars," the engineer said, consulting a tablet of figures on his desk.

"And what are all these sketch things you've got here?" asked Burmah, pointing at a pile of drawings in water-color on another table.

"Those are for the Park that we are laying out at the head of Main Street," answered Hubbard. "But that is fairly well completed now. The Colonel insisted that we have at least a hundred men working there, and with that number it doesn't take very long to make all the purely mechanical outlay on a park. Nature has to have time to do her part. It will be very fine when finished. You see, I have modeled it somewhat after the Englischer Gartens of Munich, Bavaria, a park I have always considered a rare combination of art and nature. The lake, you see there, is already nearly full, because we found a hollow that opportunely fitted our

purpose, and diverted water from the reservoir into it. Here is the drawing for the Children's Temple. This is for the Zoölogical Garden. This is for ——"

He did not finish, but stood with the drawing in his hand, staring at the angry back of Burmah Jones, as the latter, with a gesture of impotence, suddenly turned and waddled out of the room.

"No sense of the artistic whatever!" exclaimed Hubbard, wrathfully, as he threw the drawing back on the pile. "How in the world he and the Colonel ever got together, I can't understand! Knows money, and nothing else! Absolutely no artistic perception!"

Burmah, as he climbed back up the stairs to his own work, felt himself a stranger in Port Hatch. At once, he immersed himself in memoranda for press-notices, and details of his task that had to be picked up. Not many minutes passed before he was disturbed by the sounds of shouting, and, lifting the window, he called to the first man whose attention he could attract, asking the cause of the turmoil.

"Why, it's the dedication of the new schoolhouse," replied the man, a stranger to Burmah. "Colonel Hatch is going to speak, and there are to be some exercises, and singing, and a flag-raising, and everyone with an interest in the town'll be there."

Tired of work, Burmah slipped on his coat, and joined the movement. Along the street came one of the two taxi-cabs with the Colonel and Arabella in it, the Colonel bowing and smiling from right to left in acknowledgment of the greetings of those

who knew him, and he appeared as happy as an emperor driving to the forum to receive congratulations for a triumph. Behind him came the second taxi-cab with the newly elected members of the school-board, and they, too, bowed and smiled. Following here appeared three lumber wagons, each surmounted by a platform, decorated with bunting, and seating, in pyramids, rows of grave-faced little girls, dressed in white and carrying flowers. Burmah's lips twisted into a sneer of contempt as he saw this parade, which, he correctly surmised, had been planned and was being executed by the Colonel himself; but he thought it best, that he might not be accused of indifference to the welfare of the town, to follow with other of the citizens toward the school-house.

He saw that the stores had all been closed in honor of the event, and that some of them had blossomed out into flags and bunting. Even the club-house appeared deserted. He admitted to himself that the school-house was rather pretty for a small building. He edged his way around the outskirts of the crowd to where he could see the temporary platform that had been flung across the front of the building for celebration purposes. He chewed the end of his cigar, and smiled when the Colonel and Arabella mounted the stand, followed by the school-board, and the little girls in white. The crowd cheered lustily as the Colonel advanced to the front, and in true oratorical style paused long enough to drink a glass of water before beginning his speech. Burmah grinned again, and thought to himself that probably the Colonel would have preferred a mint-julep, and would have had the

julep, but that he feared it might set a bad example to the children. Nevertheless, Jones was slightly touched by the picture of the kindly old Colonel, standing there with his black slouch hat folded carefully under one arm, a hand thrust into the lapel of his "Prince Albert" coat, and the wandering breeze from the mountainside diarranging his waving white hair.

The Colonel indulged in a wonderful burst of oratory, savoring of speeches he had made in the sunny South, and filled with poetical allusions and grandiloquent phrases. He had many of the fine old platitudes about "future Presidents" and "the little red school-houses being the cradles of liberty"; yet he could not finish without coming back to his hobby.

"The greatest blessing given to an American citizen, Neighbors," he said, in a gravely modulated voice, "is to have the God-inspired gift of creating something which shall beautify the world, make the desert blossom like the rose, and give the glad sun as he climbs the peaks of the universe, performing his daily task of bringing light to his children below, something fair to look upon. May he, in his everlasting rounds fail not to smile upon the proudly beautiful city which we, by the efforts of our hands and hearts, are here creating, and particularly on this blessed edifice which we will now dedicate fittingly by the hoisting of our nation's flag. I fought against it once, being a fool in his folly; but now I fight for it, as will all those who come after me from this abode of learning."

He was choking with emotion as he turned and gave a signal. A slim school-teacher lifted her

hand, and the little girls in shrill, childish notes burst into "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," and the Colonel, enthusiastic, sprang to the front of the platform, and beckoned for the spectators to participate, he himself joining in with a high, cracked treble, quite distinctly out of time and tune. The banner was run up by Arabella, and the Colonel's excitement increased as he watched the wind catch it, and whip its folds out in gorgeous billows.

The hymn ended, and the choir appeared on the point of disbanding, when the Colonel again restrained them all by pumping his arms up and down like flails, and demanding a hearing.

"I'm going to ask you one favor, the first I've ever asked from anyone in Port Hatch," he said, "and I'm sure you all won't mind gratifying an old man's whim. I want every one to join with me in singing a song I love. I want to hear 'Dixie Land.'"

There was a wild shout from the place where the four young lawyers from Chattanooga stood, and again the Colonel sang; only Arabella, who caught him furtively wiping his eyes, knew that homesick strings had been touched in the harp of his memory. He at last descended the platform to receive congratulations. But Burmah, trying to preserve his remnant of cynicsm, slipped away, saying to himself:

"Singin' like an old simpleton! Him! Humph! Might make a good boy soprano in a church choir with what voice he's got!" Then, after a moment, his good humor returning, he added, still to himself: "But what right have I got to judge his singing? —me, who never tried to sing before three o'clock in the mornin'!"

CHAPTER XV.

A GOOD BUT HOPELESS BATTLE.

Pick, after languidly explaining to Little Billy that he thought he would stay at the club that evening, and play bridge whist, made his way after dusk toward Marquard Villa, whither Little Billy had gone after impressing it upon Tommy that he had a lot of work to do that night. And Tommy had yawned in Kirby's face, and said he was "going to hit the hay early," and then promptly taken a back route along the cliff. So Burmah, when he arrived, found the quartet surrounding Arabella, one accusing another of taking unfair advantage. Arabella, acting in the capacity of peace-maker, was pouring on the troubled waters an imitation of oil that tended to aggravate rather than pacify them, and was enjoying herself to the utmost. The Colonel paced up and down the terrace with his hands clasped beneath his coat-tails, trying his hardest to make a sonnet to the moon, and Uncle Jeff was bemoaning the lack of real "yarbs" to make a proper mint-julep.

Burmah came with an air of determination, and, without ringing the bell, or waiting for Uncle Jeff, sought the voices. The quartet and Arabella pounced upon him to act as arbiter, and, before he knew it, he was involved in the good-natured squabble.

"What they're fighting about," she explained, "is whether it's ethical for four young men to mislead one another for a selfish purpose."

"Depends on the purpose," said Burmah, tactfully.

"Purpose? Why, they were coming here to see me, and there wasn't a one of them invited as an individual. I asked them all to come."

"Conditions alter cases," judicially said Burmah, with vast seriousness. "But all's fair in love and war, and I've always held to the rule that the correct thing to do is to be sure to beat the other feller to anything you start after. I hadn't thought of it, before," he added, whimsically, "but it seems to me that I ought to marry you, myself. Will you have me?"

There were shouts, of "Unfair!" "Prejudiced Judge," and "One at a time," from the quartet; but Burmah stilled them with a wave of his hand.

"I hadn't thought of it before," replied Arabella, smiling at him, "but I'm not sure, on consideration, that I wouldn't a little bit rather marry you than any of those who have so persistently and repeatedly asked me. I'll take time to think it over, if you'll be good enough to give me—say—two or three weeks for deliberation."

"Then," said Burmah, with the utmost gravity, as he turned to the quartet, "I think you fellers ought to stand aside while there's a deal bein' considered. Now, havin' attended to that part of my business, I guess I'll go out and see the Colonel."

He brought his heels together, reached over and caught one of Arabella's hands in his, and gravely bent and kissed it. And she flushed a trifle, for she could not be sure whether his eyes, usually mocking, were not now in earnest. She looked at him, with a vague sense of perturbation, as he quietly walked

away, and out to where he could intercept the Colonel.

"Colonel," he said to the latter at the end of the terrace, "I want to talk to you about something that's none of my business. It's as a friend."

The Colonel appeared to think that Burmah had come to him for advice, and exhibited a condescending, gracious air, as he led the way to the corner of the terrace, where the concrete benches were covered with heavy cushions, and seated himself.

"Burmah," he said, "if I can be of any assistance to you, Sir, in any trouble that you may have, I am always at your service."

"It ain't about me, Colonel," said Burmah, slightly exasperated; "it's about you. I saw the plans to-day for the new City Hall. Hubbard's all right, but that thing looks to me pretty all-fired impractical. Any town of this size that has a City Hall usually has rooms for offices up above it, and a store-room or two alongside for practical rental purposes, so that the City Hall will pay for itself —the sort of a building that'll bring in returns on the investment. Why don't you try to put your money out so's you'll get something back for it?"

The Colonel waved his hand, and looked out over the sound.

"Burmah," he said, with fine dignity, "you don't understand. Any place which houses a branch, a piece, a part, of our immortal National Government, should have no taint of sordid trade. Where waves the banner of the screaming eagle must be a hallowed spot, untainted by the dollar-mark."

"I know all that, but—" Burmah began.

And again the Colonel silenced him.

"There are places, like shrines, that should be immune from the encroachments of trade. Any gentleman can make money, dead-oodles of it, Sir; but it's the hall-mark of the gentleman when he can hold back, and separate his instincts of acquisition from encroachment on his instincts as a citizen. Burmah, you are mistaken, and I grieve over it."

But Burmah had come, in his new determination, prepared to fight some reason into the Colonel's mind.

"Have the contracts been given out yet?" he asked, unabashed.

"They have," said the Colonel, "and in order to induce the contractors to haste in completing the structure, I agreed to give them a ten per cent. bonus for time."

"Then that is settled," exclaimed Burmah, with a note of regret. "Now for the next thing: If Port Hatch has to have a park, why don't you let Port Hatch pay for it?"

The Colonel suddenly arose to his full and commanding height, and it was evident to Burmah that he was struggling with temper.

"Burmah!—Mr. Jones," he said, with cutting emphasis, "I am Port Hatch!" He tapped his breast in emphasis, and Burmah, after staring at him for a moment, threw up both hands with an air of resignation.

"Colonel," he said, quietly, "I'm goin' to say it to you—goin' to say something, because you're dead sure to get the worst of a bad deal in the long run, unless you pull up. I wouldn't have talked to you this way a month ago. I wouldn't do it now, only someone's got to, and you believe in me."

"As I do in my own life!" interjected the Colonel, reseating himself and relaxing.

"You've had more than a hundred and fifty thousand dollars in cash out of Port Hatch already," Burmah went on, in the same steady voice. "I've had nearly as much. I've kept mine, almost every cent of it! What have you got? Almost nothin', save what I paid you yesterday."

"Almost nothing?" roared the Colonel, again exhibiting signs of restlessness. "Why, I've got the finest residence in the State, in the United States, in the world, so far as artistic beauty is concerned. What have I got? I've got a school-house started, a club named after me, a public wharf, pavements, and a city park. What in hell more could a man want, Sir?"

"That's all right," calmly replied Burmah to the explosion, "but, Colonel, parks and clubs, and school-houses and city halls, and pavements and wharves, ain't goin' to feed Miss Arabella after you're dead and gone, and they ain't goin' to keep Marquard Villa repaired and cared for. You've got somebody besides Port Hatch to think about. Colonel, if you won't do it for anyone else, hang on to some of it for her. Hang on to some of it, to please me. You know you owe it to me, some of it, for helpin' you get hold of it, and makin' it a go—under your advice." He added the last as an afterthought, playing by habit on that chord of vanity.

The Colonel melted somewhat, and laid a hand on Burmah's knee, a thing that he had never done before save under extreme stress, and Burmah recognized the conciliatory significance of it, and grew hopeful.

"There are three things," said the Colonel softly, "for whom and which I would do anything in the world—or make any sacrifice. The first is my daughter, whom I love as few men have loved their offspring. The second and third, equal in my affection, are Port Hatch, God bless Her! and you, Burmah Jones! Don't you see, that I've got land left, hundreds of acres of it, stretching off up there like a glorious carpet laid at the mountain's feet, and every foot of which is going to be valuable when the railway comes, and Port Hatch has become a magnificent city of tens of thousands where now she has but hundreds?"

"But—but—," almost whispered Burmah, "suppose the railway don't come?"

The Colonel ran a troubled hand over his brow, which appeared white and ascetic in the moonlight.

"It's got to come!" he declared, hoarsely.

"But, Colonel, suppose it don't! There's nothin' in the world dead sure until it's happened."

"You told me—"

"Never mind what I told you," insisted Burmah. "I'm just like anybody else. Sometimes I make mistakes. I've made a lot of 'em. Colonel, I wish you'd hang on to what you have and what comes in, until the railroad does come. After that, if it does, you'll have enough to build a marble opera-house and not feel it."

He had made his first tactical blunder, and knew it; but it was too late.

"By Jingoes!" exclaimed the Colonel, enthuiastically, "I never thought of that! A marble opera-house. Burmah, you're the most wonderful assistant a man in finance ever had. Your hand, Sir!

I'm mighty grateful to you for that suggestion. I'll ask Hubbard to begin the plans right away to-morrow."

Burmah made one more attempt to check the splendid, unselfish old spendthrift in his dreams, and turned toward him, and stared an appeal into his eyes.

"But, Colonel, won't you promise this, for what I've tried to do: that you won't build the opera-house until after the first engine whistles its way into Port Hatch?"

The Colonel deliberated for a long time, and Burmah feared that he was going to refuse. Then, as if he had weighed the subject impartially, the Colonel said:

"Yes, I'll promise it to you; but I'll be hanged if I'd promise as big a sacrifice as that to any other man on earth!"

Burmah stood up wearily, and looked out over the terrace, convinced that the time was inopportune to demand more. The Colonel had stated a truth, in one respect, that he had abundant acreage remaining if ever the railway came. For once in his life Burmah was unselfish; for none of this land beyond was subdivided, and therefore he could expect nothing from its revenues. He was sick at heart from fear that the Colonel could not be restrained, and that the inevitable crash and collapse would find him penniless and unprepared. He looked uncertainly around him, and then caught at another idea. He would bring all the influence he could bear to keep the Colonel from squandering anything further. He would appeal to Arabella, and he would enlist the boys from Chattanooga. He

would brow-beat Hubbard into sensible acceptance of deferring everything, and would himself constantly warn the Colonel in every possible way.

"I think," he said, "that I ought to talk to Miss Arabella for a while, so you'll excuse me, won't you, Colonel?"

And the Colonel, nothing loath to solitude for the important business of thinking over a marble opera-house, was quite agreeable.

Burmah wandered into the house and out upon the lawn, where he heard, faintly, the broken words and sentences of an animated conversation, and this he traced to a new summer-house, built with crude log supports and rustic seats. Hubbard, having joined the quartet, was there paying court to Arabella, and was expatiating on the value of classical designs as compared with modern atrocities. His long hair was tossed back, his poetic eyes were glowing like coals, and his white, graceful hands were gesturing rapidly to emphasize his arguments. All the others, duly impressed, gazed at him, spell-bound, as he volleyed sentences at them on his theory of beautification. He checked himself as he saw the square shape of the Kansan in the entrance, and the latter seized the opportunity to turn the conversation by politely asking Arabella if the three weeks were up yet.

"Almost," she declared; "but perhaps I shall have to extend the time."

"That's something that needs talkin' over," said Burmah, mockingly. "And, as the time's so short, I think I'd like to have you walk around this whole lawn, once, with me, where we won't be bothered by any of these old gentlemen."

Beneath all his bantering and assumption of gaiety, she knew, intuitively, that some serious purpose was in him, and that he wished to talk with her alone.

"All right! I accept," she retorted, and hastened over to take his arm. "Now mind you, all of you," she commanded, turning to her admirers, who stared at her according to individual moods, "no one of you is invited. You must all wait here until I come back."

Burmah walked with no uncertain step along a path that led to a stone seat near the edge of the cliff, and, as he went, he passed nothing but comments on the improvements that had been made in the grounds. Reaching the bench, he beckoned her to a seat, and she saw that his face was grave and thoughtful.

"Miss Arabella," he said, bluntly, "what I want to talk about is your father. Somebody ought to try and keep him from blowin' in every copper that he gets as fast as he gets it. Do you know what he's goin' to do now? Build a City Hall! Lord Almighty! If this keeps up he'd better begin to build a nice poor-house, so's he'll have some place to fall into when this boom's busted. I want you to help me."

She looked up at him with a troubled face, which portrayed perplexity also.

"Why, hasn't he lots of money?" she asked. "I thought, from what he says, that he must be worth a million."

"No, he ain't got lots of money, and he ain't worth no million!" savagely replied Burmah. "He's had about a hundred and fifty thousand cash, and I've got no idea how much of it's left; but I guess that,

if he paid the things he's contracted for, he'd have less than twenty-five thousand. Just think of it! Only twenty-five thousand out of a hundred and fifty, in three or four months."

He walked backward and forward in front of her, his fat hands, on one of which was displayed the diamond of vulgar size, gesturing now and then, and the diamond flashed in the moonlight as if punctuating his sentence.

"Look what he's done with it all," he exclaimed, contemptuously. "The only dollar that he has spent on himself is for Marquard Villa. He ain't even bought a new pair of shoes since he came here. All he's done, with all he got, was to give free pavements and free buildings to Port Hatch. The land he gave for the Park would be worth hundreds of thousands if a railway ever did come here, and on top of that he goes to work, and turns Hubbard loose to fix it up. Zoölogical Gardens—bah!—fountains—artificial lakes—all rubbish! He must be stopped; and he's so devilish crusty that we've all got to take a hand in tryin' to discourage him every time he gets a new fool idea. It ain't as if he was young. . . . . Somehow or another, I've got so, lately, that I'm afraid of the years!"

He stopped, and looked out upon the mountains for a while before continuing, as if to himself and forgetful of her presence; a pudgy, impolite philosopher, with his back turned toward his companion.

"It's time that always beats us. Just that! Time! There's a man-child born at every tick of the clock. We ain't no good before we're twenty-one, and we croak at sixty. When you come to figure

out all the time that we're asleep and drunk, we don't live very long, nohow!"

Arabella's voice recalled him.

"I didn't hear you, Burmah," she said; and he felt a glow at her unconscious use of his name.

"What I mean by all this," he said, wheeling so that he faced her, "is that something's got to be done to curb the Colonel, and I want you to help me."

Her shapely eyebrows were drawn into a frown, and her face was a picture of distress as she met his eyes.

"But what can I do? You know how father is! No one can influence him."

"You can do this," he asserted. "You can listen to his plans. You can argue against them—not so he'll notice it, but just to find ways of makin' him change his mind. You must never let him think you don't believe his new hobby-horse the finest that ever was rode; but always suggest that maybe there's another that's got prettier paint on it. You must always appear to agree, and inside of your head know that you don't agree. You must always smile, and pat his cheek, the way I've seen you pat it, even if your heart's sick over some new-fangled way of throwin' away the bank-roll. And you can do more than all that. You can tell me, always, when he's gat a new hobby-horse in mind, and I'll do my darndest to see that it's taken out of the shop window before he can get around to buy it, or that it comes to him with a broken leg."

She got up impulsively, and came to him. She put both white hands on his arms, and looked him full in the face, with the trustful affection of a sister

for a big and strong brother, and he sustained a pang of sorrow because he had been compelled to bring even this worthy distress upon her.

"You are so good!" she whispered. "You talk differently than the men I have known; but there's something in the way you say things that makes anyone know, without thinking, that you are honest and wise."

Beneath the confidence of her touch, and the trust and admiration in her voice, he shuddered as the lash bit deeply. But his eyes did not lower themselves, and he appeared the same immobile, unemotional, stocky, fat man, grotesque in his vulgarity of dress, masterful in the dominant features of his face and head.

"Then you'll do it?" he insisted, never varying from the point that he sought to attain.

"Yes, I will," she promised with outspoken candor and no reservation. "And I'll do it without feeling that I am a spy on my own father, because I know, now, that it is for his good."

"Then," he said, masking his gratitude under the guise of raillery, "my time of suspense has been extended another three weeks, and I can take you back to where Hubbard is probably spoutin' about the high-art way of how to build parrot-cages."

He made a flourish with his hat, and offered his arm, and talked lightly of trivial things, as he led her back to the arbor, at the entrance of which he bade her good-night. He waved his hand to the young men who waited, and pretended to whistle gaily as he passed out through the gates; but, immediately after, he sobered, and walked along the road a worried, tired, conscience-smitten old man.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DREAMER IS EXTRAVAGANT.

On the morning after the conspiracy against expenditure had been hatched by Burmah Jones, the Colonel, in his pajamas and with ruffled hair, got up and stalked to the window, and prepared to enjoy the dawn. The early twittering of the birds and the splendor of daybreak had always appealed to him; but here, in the midst of beauty, where the rugged Olympics shattered the sky-line, the forests on their flanks marched like an army, and the waters of the sound palpitated in expectancy, the Colonel was in his element. Carnations, massed beneath his window, filled the somnolent air with fragrance. Roses beyond, now mere clumps and patches of dark foliage, would, as the sun arose, become jewels of red, blazing like imperial rubies toward his window. White roses would be picked out as they stared in purity, and pink ones would display shy modesty. Mount Rainier in the distance would remind him of austere heights to which gentlemen might climb, and the window from which he leaned would become a palace casement, whence he, a gentlemanly king and a financial genius, might look out over his domain with its slumbering subjects. He had dreamed of a marble opera-house that outshone the great edifice in Paris, a house he knew only in picture. He had enjoyed the dream to the full; for he had made a speech, and he tried, sleepily, there in the dawn, to think of

some of those wonderful phrases he had coined when standing behind the footlights. A half-fledged caterpillar, making its laborious way along the window ledge, interested him, and he very gently decoyed it to a piece of paper, and carried it down to the lawn, and liberated it, heedless of the fact that his feet were bare, and the new turf covered with dew. A newspaper on the stand in the hall caught his eye, and he smiled as he remembered that by the advent of Burmah he had been prevented from reading it on the preceding evening. He carried it up the stairs with him, and in the red light from the eastern sky found his glasses, and glanced over it idly, pausing now and then to lift his eyes and watch for some new display of color in the heavens. Something in the advertising columns caught his vagrant glance, and he suddenly went out on the balcony where the light was stronger, and with bated breath read the article through. His lips were open, and his whole attitude portrayed the most intense interest. The old clock from his ancestral home in Tennessee, now pioneering with the Hatch family in the North-west, and standing watchfully at the foot of the Hatch stairs, struck age-mellowed chimes, and the Colonel lifted his head, and counted straight through until the total of five was reached.

"Five o'clock," he muttered, "and the early boat for Seattle sails at six-thirty. I can surely make it. This is a grand opportunity, not to be wasted. I must hurry."

He skipped excitedly around the room, dragged his trousers on wrong side foremost, and delivered

objurgations, lost a cuff-button from his shirt, and had difficulty in knotting his old-fashioned scarf. He tied the laces of his shoes in hasty hard knots to save time, and forgot to wash his face, or comb his hair. Benjamin Franklin had said that the way to success was to take time by the forelock, as the Colonel remembered it, so, metaphorically, he grabbed Father Time by the whiskers, scythe and lantern, to make sure. Like Father Time, the Colonel was proud of his ability to make haste where business was concerned. He hurried downstairs, and wrote a note to Arabella, which read:

"Have been compelled to go to the city on extremely important business, by the early boat. Shall probably not return home for two or three days. But when I do come will have a surprise for you, my dear little girl, that will make you happy. A thousand kisses from your devoted old Daddy."

He slipped into the breakfast-room, and put his note in a conspicuous place, and then tore madly out of the house and down the road toward the wharf and the steamer. Now and then, an early workman saluted him, and he always found time to lift his hat, and wish each a pleasant day. Now and then, other early risers stared out of windows at his lank and hurrying figure, and always they smiled at this Colonel of Hearts. The captain of the steamer saluted him, and shouted a good-morning from the bridge, and the stewards, mindful of his liberal tips, hastened to his service. The few passengers who made regular trips to Seattle were all eager to have a few words with him, and the world went very happily. He stood alone as the

boat pulled out, and, when it came abreast of his home, perched like an eagle's nest high above, he threw his hands wide, and blew a kiss in the direction of it, and murmured, "Good-by, Arabella! Sleep well, little sweetheart!"

He burst into song, having repeated reference to one part of his ditty—that which went, "Daddy's gone a-hunting to get a rabbit skin."

But, when the boat arrived at Seattle, the Colonel might have been accused of having misinformed his daughter; for he pulled out his watch, and hastened up the street toward the railway station, where he walked inside, and bought a ticket for Centralia, a near-by County seat.

At two o'clock of the sunny afternoon, there was a strange sight in that fine little city. Small boys and farmers had been congregating for some time preceding, and a heterogeneous crowd wound its way toward the edge of the town. There were lumber-jacks enjoying the dull season, all the chronic loafers, four or five sporty, but glum-looking, gentlemen with loud clothes, and an equally somber collection of men and women, whose movements, beneath ill-fitting clothes, displayed a certain lightness and excellent muscular development. The sporty gentlemen were those who had owned "Buzzard's Biggest Menagerie and Most Colossal Circus," until the Sheriff had stopped its progress, and the group of well-muscled ladies and gentlemen were unpaid performers, who hoped the Sheriff would sell for enough at least to pay them their back wages. The small boys went to get a free look at the animals that were to be sold under the hammer,

the lumber-jacks in the hope that there might be a chance for a free-for-all fight, and the others were merely going to see the fun. There were almost as many persons in attendance as on that day when "Buzzard's Biggest" came to the town, and spread its frayed, patched, and discolored canvas to the clean Washington air, and polluted the place with multi-odors. On that glad day there had been a shimmering of imitation silk; gallant, but unkempt, knights in tin uniforms had ridden travel-worn and dejected horses through the streets, and the "Hundred-Thousand-Dollar Beauty," her face stiff with powder and paint, had stared haughtily at the crowd from, "the most gorgeous chariot in the world, outrivaling the Oriental masterpiece of Cleopatra," and beside her had stood a proud Marc Antony, who, in private life, was named Abraham Abramsky, and had the concession for lemonade with the big show. But alas! So fleetly had time traveled, all these were gone to other fields, save those acrobats with families, who could not depart until funds were secured through the Sheriff.

The Sheriff was a blasé individual, who wore a soft hat suggesting an acquaintance at some time in his career with wandering steers over a very broad, unfenced range. With him were two or three other men, who calmly eyed the lumber-jacks, and the circus men, and whose sack coats bulged over belts, these being mere deputies brought along to preserve order. And in the heart of this procession, smiling with the keenest enjoyment, proudly intent on acquiring a zoölogical collection, fervid with dreams for Port Hatch, walked the Colonel,

with head erect and hands in his pockets lest some one should remove his valuables.

The "big top" was down, and had lost all its glamour, being merely a huge heap of dirty canvas with numerous piles of battered blue lumber around it, the latter being seats that had supported joyous multitudes in days when business was good, and been unfortunately empty as the show toured the West. The wagons looked as if they needed paint and a rest, and the chariot, once the proud vehicle for the prize beauty, who had now opened a manicure parlor, appeared dingy and forlorn. Only one spread of canvas was there, and its sides were rolled up as if to mock those glad days when they were down, and urchins were spanked on prominent portions of their anatomy as they attempted to crawl beneath. Sheltered from the sun that beat down upon it, what animals were left of Buzzard's grand menagerie slept with profound gratitude for the peaceful rest that had so unexpectedly descended upon their imprisoned lives.

The Sheriff halted the crowd outside, as best he could; but the small boys, the ranchers and most of the lumber-jacks passed on and stared at the animals, and at the surly keeper who lay at length on the ground in front, scornfully "sizing up the jays." The Colonel was among those that waited outside, while the Sheriff mounted a pile of seats, and read his notice of sale in a humdrum voice, as if eager to be through with his unusual task.

"The first articles on which we will ask bids," he said, "are the tents you see piled there, and the seats of this show. Somebody make an offer."

The showmen, who had been consulting as he read the notice, opened the bidding, and had such small opposition that the sale was almost perfunctory. They appeared satisfied at the lowness of the price, and grinned and chuckled, and glowered at the acrobats, who, a melancholy group, stood on one side.

The horses and wagons went next, and again the sporty-looking gentlemen had it much their own way, and the bidding lacked spirit. Then the Sheriff proposed that the entire contents of the menagerie tent be sold in a lump, and again the acrobats looked mournful, and whispered to one another, as if the case were hopeless; but they were interested when the tall old gentleman, with the rose in his lapel, stepped forward, and, in a drawling voice, accosted the officer.

"Excuse me, Mister Sheriff," he said, with the utmost respect, "but, if you don't mind, I'd sort of like to look at the animals that are to be sold. Can you show them to me, Sir?"

The sporty-looking gentlemen acted as if some one had applied an electric shock to them, as they heard this request, and crowded forward with loud expostulations.

"Go on with the sale," their leader demanded truculently, and the Sheriff's eye gleamed with a new light.

"Suppose you hold your yawp," he retorted, shortly. "Whose runnin' this sale—you or me?"

The group of acrobats who had concluded that they were to be robbed, after all, by their former employers, brightened visibly, and came closer, prepared to "rough it" in behalf of the Sheriff, if given the slightest possible pretext.

"This rube's had thirty days to look at animals, if he means business," growled the spokesman for the would-be buyers. "What's he buttin' in here for, anyhow? Go on and put 'em up."

The Sheriff still smiled pleasantly.

"I believe," he remarked, "that I said I didn't need none of your help." He turned toward the Colonel, and added, "Certainly, you can have a look at 'em, if you want to bid. The animals ain't in no hurry, and I ain't, either."

The sporty man elbowed his way in with his hat jammed back on his head, and in so doing shoved the Colonel to one side; but his action did not in the least escape the officer's vigilant eye.

"Hey, Jim," he called to one of his deputies. "Just grab this smart aleck here, and take him up and chuck him in till we get this sale over. He's interferin' with an officer in discharge of his duty."

The man called Jim collared the disturber so quickly that the latter had no time to put up a fight. Two of his associates shoved themselves forward, and the Sheriff suddenly attracted their attention in a very decisive manner.

"Stop!" he shouted, and they looked up at him. A big, worn Colt's pistol was pointed down toward them. They decided to stand still.

"We came here expectin' somethin' of this sort," said the Sheriff, with the utmost calmness, "and I want to warn you fellers that it won't go. Either me or my deputies would just as soon pot-shot a circus man as we would anything else. First come, first served. Glad to meet you gentlemen on any kind of a basis. Jim, go ahead with that big slob

you've got, and throw him in. Bill, you go along to see that Jim doesn't have to kill him without a witness handy. Now, Mister, if you want to have a look at them animals, we'll show 'em to you."

The acrobats grinned derisively at their former boss, as he was led sullenly away; his companions in the bidding syndicate decided that discretion was the better plan to pursue, and the Sheriff dropped down from his stand, and led the way for the Colonel, who appeared mildly dazed and interested in all the excitement, though thinking of but one feature, the menagerie.

"I'm takin' it for granted you mean business, Mister," the Sheriff said, as they started toward the crowd around the cages.

"I want to buy some animals," replied the Colonel, with deep fervor. "I'm going to give them to a park. My name, Sir, is Colonel Alonzo Fairfax Hatch," he concluded; and the Sheriff suddenly became very respectful.

"Why, you're the man that's makin' that new town for the Railroad Company, ain't you?" he asked, and the Colonel was duly flattered.

"I am, Sir," he replied, with a display of pride.

"Then I'm glad you came," grinned the Sheriff, "because, you see, these fellers that owned this circus just stalled through, and thought this was the cheapest way to pay their debts—have a Sheriff's sale. Bid her in by some of their own men, and let these poor devils they owed get about one cent on the dollar. Sure, you can see the beasts. Come on, Colonel Hatch, and have a look at 'em."

The acrobats, who had kept as close as they

dared, and strained their ears to catch all this conversation, nodded happily, looked relieved, and saw to it that the way was quite clear for the Colonel to make his inspection. A dealer in animals would have been satisfied, and contemptuous, at sight of the first display; but the Colonel, who had never owned a menagerie, was as delighted as any small boy that ever stood before gratings. One of the acrobats, who professionally was a strong man, shoved his way hastily ahead, and whispered to the keeper who had been lounging in front of the cages, and the latter, hopeful at last of getting his full back pay, evinced a sudden interest, and hurried down behind the rope to meet the prospective buyer when he halted in front of a battered cage containing two sleeping lions.

"Behold the kings of the jungle!" shouted the keeper, repeating the patter that he had been taught for the entertainment of crowds while working with other small menageries at Coney Island in New York. "The two finest specimens of their kind in captivity. . . . . Pompey! Git up, and let the gentleman cast his lamps over you!"

He prodded the nearest sleeping lion with a short stick he carried, and succeeded in raising a grunt from the king of the jungle. Finding that this failed to arouse the tired beast, he put both hands through the bars, seized the king by his mane, and almost hauled him to his feet. The cage mate also got up and yawned, and the Colonel stared with immense admiration at two of the most moth-eaten lions that had ever ridden on top of wagons through crowded streets—ancient, kindly, toothless beasts,

which had come to regard the world with cynical laziness, and, being born in captivity, cared for nothing beyond the flavoring of the grease-soaked poultices that were fed them in their fine old cage. They looked reproachfully at their keeper, who now stood back, and waved a hand at them.

"There they are, Sir," he croaked in his hoarse, and worn-out "spieler's" voice. "The finest animals that's ever been behind a cage. Yes, Sir, them's two noble lions. Males, they are."

The Colonel's face clouded.

"It seems to me there'd ought to be a lion and a lioness always together," he said sorrowfully. "We want specimens for our Park, and—"

"Did I say Males?" demanded the keeper hastily. "Excuse me, Boss, I was mistook, or you didn't get me. That's a pair of mates. Lord! They been together since they was caught in Africy. Why, bless you, Sir! That there female didn't need to have got caught at all. No, Sir! They caught the old he-lion, and she came and tried to help him get away. The man what caught 'em cried about it when he told me how it happened."

"Remarkable! Remarkable illustration of animal affection!" said the Colonel, admiringly. "We must have them. Indeed, that adds very much to their sentimental value. He acted as if struggling with a desire to compliment the lions on their loyalty; but inasmuch as poor, tired old Pompey laid himself out again to finish his nap, was diverted to the next cage, where a tiger that was badly striped, undersized, and had been crippled in a railway accident, went limping around his narrow space.

"Some animal, ain't he?" said the keeper. "Royal king of the jungles. Man-eater from Darkest Africy. The peerless—"

He stopped suddenly, when he saw that the Colonel was frowning at the animal's painful limp, and dropped the long line of empty sentences.

"That foot's all right," he said. "All it needs is some liniment and a rag; but, you see, Boss, we ain't had time to do nothin' since these rubes out here stuck us up. That's some tiger! Believe me!"

He hastily diverted the Colonel's attention to the next cage, where a half-dozen monkeys chattered joyously in the hope of peanuts, and the Colonel smiled happily. He did not notice the long rigmarole that the keeper vented on the virtues and rarity of the collection, all of which, needless to say, was delighfully untrue. Next came a cage containing a very common, ordinary specimen of timber wolf on one side of a partition, while on the other was an equally common coyote. Another wagon held a quite homesick hyena, and still another held the only specimen in the whole collection worth looking at, a fine jaguar, whose lithe muscles rippled silkily as he worked restlessly around his cage. A poor little elephant, old, wise, and philosophic, put out a friendly trunk, and the Colonel "shook hands" with him, and warmed to him.

"He's just naturally askin' you to take him home with you," the keeper declared. "He's plumb sick of loafin' around this burg, same as me."

Close by the elephant stood a placid camel, soft eyed and unconcerned, and possessed, as Harris Dickson once said, of "a noble smell." They had

reached the end of the display, and the Colonel paused. The keeper leaned forward, and talked confidentially.

"Say, Boss," he muttered, "the big feller told me you wanted 'em for a park. Got any body to keep 'em? If you ain't, I'd sort of like the job."

"Thank you, Sir. Thank you!" replied the Colonel. "I hadn't thought about that part of it, and you'd be just the man. They know you, and that might keep them from feelin' so lonesome in Port Hatch."

"Know me? Well, I guess yes!" answered the keeper, still confidentially. "Why, I reckon some of them there animules would die if they know'd I wasn't goin' with 'em. Yes, Sir, just turn up their toes, and kick the bucket. They ain't no man in the world knows more about menageries than I do. Maybe you've hearn tell of the great Zo-Zo, King of the Beasts? That's me!"

He eyed the Colonel keenly, swelled out his chest, and assumed a pose.

"Get me, Boss?" he asked. "King of the Beasts —that's me. And say, if youre goin' to put this royal menagerie into a park, it'll make that park second only to the Bronx back in little old New York. You see, you can pick up more of 'em now an' then. And say, Boss, leave it to me to condition 'em. I'm great at it. I can take a tiger rug off'n a parlor floor, and have it walkin' around a cage and roarin' in two months. Buy 'em in, Boss. Buy 'em in!"

The Sheriff interrupted a conversation that might have lasted all the afternoon, by saying:

"Well, Colonel, that's all of 'em. Shall I go ahead with the sale now?"

The Colonel said yes, and stepped after the officer with an air of unmistakeable determination and fire in his eye. The crowd opened for them respectfully, for it had been passed round in whispers that this was the millionaire financier who was building the model city, which had been so extensively advertised, and the Sheriff again took his stand on the outside. The sporty, but downcast and subdued, circus men had been holding a whispered conference, and were plainly angry. They had expected to get the menagerie on the same short terms that had characterized their purchase of the other equipment; but surmised that this "old ignoramus," who knew nothing whatever of the value of beasts f. o. b., would probably run the price up beyond all hope. They opened the bidding by offering five hundred dollars for the lot, tent included. One of the acrobats whispered to the Colonel and tugged at his sleeve.

"Ask the fly cop to knock down the canvas separate," he suggested; and the Colonel voiced the request, which was immediately granted.

The circus men bought the canvas at a bargain rate, and again the Sheriff asked for bids on the menagerie. He enumerated in a sing-song voice what was to be sold. "One steam calliope, one golden chariot of state with lots of silken umbrellas, one royal Bengal tiger," and so on through the list, and then turned expectantly toward his audience.

"Five hundred," growled one of the circus men.

"One thousand," nervously shouted the Colonel.

"Ten fifty," shouted the opposition.

"Eleven," said the Colonel, getting warmer under the collar.

"Eleven twenty-five," came the quick bid from the other side, and the Colonel grew suddenly desperate.

"Four thousand dollars," he shouted at the top of his voice, glaring at the check-suited group.

The acrobats grinned with delight, and one of them turned a hand-spring, while the opposition bidders shrugged their shoulders and swore.

"Any more bids over there? Do I hear any more bids?" demanded the Sheriff, staring at the two circus men; but they stood sullenly quiet.

"You ain't goin' to lay down your hands, are you, you fellers?" demanded the Sheriff.

"Lay down our hands?" shouted the one who had been doing the bidding. "Why, nobody but a sucker'd offer that for that bunch of junk! Let him have 'em!" and he also added two or three impolite words consigning the animals that had composed the most marvelous collection on earth to a hot hereafter.

"Going once! Going twice! Third and last call! All done? Sold to Colonel Hatch for four thousand dollars!" the Sheriff ended, banging a tent stake on the lumber pile.

The Colonel let out a real Rebel-yell of triumph that sounded far across the heads of the crowd, and pulled out his cheque-book. He gave the Sheriff the slip of paper while the admiring crowd watched a man who could so easily turn over such a sum, and then the new owner hastened back to view his collection. The keeper was waiting to congratulate him.

"It's a bargain, Boss! It's dead cheap!" he assured him, knowing all the time that he lied. "Now, about that job?"

"Why, we'll start to ship them right away, this afternoon," said the Colonel, anxious to hasten back to Port Hatch.

"But the wages, Boss? What do I get?" demanded the cautious keeper.

The Colonel was frankly puzzled.

"What do animal-keepers usually receive?" he asked, thus further exposing his innocence.

"A hundred and fifty a month's what most of 'em gets," said the wily keeper, whose largest pay had never exceeded "forty and found." "But you see Hagenback's been wirin' and cablin' to me to come over to Hamburg to take charge of his animals, and—"

"I'll make it a hundred and seventy-five dollars," said the Colonel.

The keeper appeared to hesitate; but was afraid that if he ventured further this golden goose might be strangled, so he decided to close.

"All right, Boss," he said. "That ain't as much as I might get over with Haggy, but this climate out here suits me fine. That's why I'm out on the Coast now. Yes, Sir, I'll go you."

The Sheriff, who had approached, had a suggestion to offer.

"The flat cars some of these came in on is down here on the switch yet, Colonel," he said, "and I saw the station-agent outside there, just now. If you want 'em you'd better let me slip over and give him the tip before these scrubs that bought the rest of the shebang beat you to it."

The Colonel thanked him profusely, and the Sheriff hurried away.

"And I can get a drayman to haul the cages aboard for you," said his new keeper with a desire to show his efficiency. "Then we can get 'em out and into Seattle by mornin', if that's where you want to go. We only need one rattler for the elephant and camel."

This suggestion, also, was received thankfully by the Colonel, and the keeper enlisted one of the acrobats to assist him by chasing after the drayman. A few of the canvas men who had "stuck" by the show began to move around and exort the loafers to clear away. In long slips, the canvas covering of the menagerie came down. Men shoved the cages outside, where the keeper began clamping on the shutters, and finally the tent itself came fluttering to the ground, slowly, under short-handed work. The drayman came, and had difficulty in getting his frightened horses up to their task, and the men the Colonel hired, sweated, and cursed, and assisted the entraining of "Buzzard's Best Menagerie" as it pulled away from the spot where it had stood so long. The animals restively moved about in their confinement, and vented their sorrows to their kind. The little elephant tested the gang-way leading up to the box-car that had been allotted him, and the camel, with many grunts, followed patiently after. The Colonel's menagerie was ready to begin its last journey, and the Colonel himself, tired, but happy, walked back and forth on the station platform, and proudly stared at his collection.

CHAPTER XVII.

AND LANDS A MENAGERIE.

The Colonel arrived in Seattle late on the following morning, and was vastly disappointed when he learned that the boat for Port Hatch had sailed; for his impatience to land his collection in the Port Hatch Public Park and Zoölogical Garden made it difficult to brook delay. He was obliged, however, to resign himself to necessity, and, when he realized that he had put in an almost sleepless night, and stood sadly in need of a nap, he went to his hotel. He partially disrobed, and, with a sigh, stretched himself out on his comfortable bed; in a minute he was peacefully snoring, dreaming of other fields to conquer. Heavenly strains of music seemed to filter through his dreams, and, after a while, he turned restlessly, before sitting erect on the edge of the bed to listen. There was no mistaking the cause of the disturbance, for below his window a band was gaily tootling away, and he slipped over and leaned out, his ruffled white hair and eyebrows, his collarless shirt, and his suspenders showing themselves gaily to any passer-by who might chance to look upward toward the third story of the caravansery.

Below him, at the curb's edge, a little German band of vagabond musicians, with battered horns and squeaky clarionets, was rending the air in an attempt to play "Waldteüfel's Waltz," an old favorite of the Colonel's, to which he had danced a sprightly step fifty years agone. From where he

looked out, he could see nothing but the bells of dented brass instruments, some faded red caps and shoulders with equally faded gilt epaulettes. No matter, the music was there. The Colonel appeared to be the only one who found it tuneful, for the throngs moving along the pavements below did not pause to pay tribute to Waldteüfel. Indeed, some of the passers-by clapped their hands to their ears as if hearing something agonizing in this praiseworthy attempt. The Colonel's eyes lost their drowsy expression, and began to look dreamy. The band, after a short pause, struck up "Maryland, My Maryland," and the Colonel wagged time with his head, and hummed an accompaniment, and then, quite suddenly, he stopped, and his eyes were distended, and his lips parted.

"By Jimminy Crickets!" he exclaimed aloud. "Don't see why I never thought of that!"

And straightway he got back into the room, and began hastily to don his collar and tie. He was afraid, from the cessation of sound from without, that the band had escaped, and he ran to the window to look. His fears were justified, for the little party in red was starting up St. James' Street as if completely discouraged.

"Hey! Hey, you!" the Colonel shouted, wildly; but no one heard, or, if any did hear, no one heeded him.

He plunged out into the hall, and pressed the bell for the elevator with an impatient and prolonged punch, and was plainly excited when the car halted in front of his floor.

"Down, Boy! Down quickly!" the Colonel or-

dered, and, on the instant the car stopped at the main floor, he plunged out, and ran into the street. The Colonel caught sight of a red coat vanishing into a lager-beer saloon, a block and a half away, and he doggedly hurried in that direction. Breathless with endeavor and excitement, he raced into the resort, and found the nine musicians thirstily immersing their noses in nine foaming steins of beer. A lugubrious-appearing individual, who seemed on friendly terms with the bandsmen, sighted the Colonel, and punched the man nearest him, who promptly pulled his stein a short distance from his face, and there held it suspended, while foam dripped from a Teutonic mustache, and two round Teutonic eyes stared innocently at his neighbor.

"Dat's de old guy wot bought de animules," hoarsely muttered the lugubrious man, as if imparting precious information. The bandsmen said, "Jah? Ach, Gott!" and chuckled.

The Colonel advanced toward them, and asked, most politely:

"Which one of you gentlemen is the leader of this band?"

"Dot is me!" proudly asserted the man who had been first apprised of the Colonel's identity. "I am der Herr Schmidt, *Kapellmeister*."

"Then you are the man I want to talk with," the Colonel asserted, with great satisfaction; and the band leader promptly told his companions, in German, to wait, and led the way to a beer-stained table in the rear of the room.

"I am Colonel Hatch, from the City of Port Hatch, Sir," said the Colonel, with great gravity,

"and our city, the finest on earth, has no musical organization."

"Ach! What a shame!" ejaculated Herr Schmidt, raising his hands in horror, and rolling his eyes toward the ceiling as if asking the dingy cobwebs above how such a thing could be.

"I want to know, Sir, if you could be induced to bring your band to Port Hatch, and remain there permanently," the Colonel said, with admirable brevity.

Herr Schmidt looked at him, too astonished to blink. At various times, he had known men to ask him to move on, but this was the first time he could remember that anyone had ever asked him to stay. The lugubrious man came and hovered near the table; but Herr Schmidt did not object.

"Are dere any saloons in dis town?" he asked, cautiously investigating the disadvantages of a residence in Port Hatch.

"There are none now, Mister Smith," replied the Colonel, and then hastily added: "But we hope to have some before long."

"You can git yer booze shipped up, you big Dutch chump," expostulated the lugubrious man, poking his friend in the ribs.

"Port Hatch will be the greatest city in the world inside of a year or two," the Colonel said, seriously, "and it will have an opera-house that will want an orchestra, and it will want an orchestra for its dances, and it now needs a band to give concerts in its Park, and it will support a worthy director who makes his band a good one, a big one, one that will be worthy of such a great city."

Herr Schmidt, paralyzed by his own good fortune, was speechless, and shut his eyes. There flashed through his mind all that he had dreamed when he had been a boy emigrating to America; all his adversities, all his failures, all his slide downward from steady positions to that of a wandering mendicant. The old chap was moist-eyed when he looked at the Colonel, and pronounced his ultimatum.

"Und ve can stay by dis Port Hetch? Und can a big band haf? All ridt! Ve goes!" His words tumbled over one another in his anxiety.

"Now, about the finances, Mister Smith," said the Colonel, remembering that he must drive a bargain, because Russell Sage had declared that to be the beginning of all things. "Would five hundred dollars a month be enough to pay for it?"

"Und vat we can on de outside make?" demanded the German, cautiously thinking of his followers.

"Certainly, Sir, you would get that," agreed the Colonel. "And, as the band grew, you would get more. Also, we will build a club-house for your men where they can sleep."

"Ve goes!" shouted Herr Schmidt, rising in his exuberance, and waving a clarionet. "Ve goes, und by und by ve vill a band haf! No musegons, aber ein band mit musicians! A band that shall grow ven ve gets blaces for blumbers, und tinschmitts, und tailors, und tinkers, und—Ach! Und I shall de Herr Director be!"

He threatened to embrace the Colonel and the latter, still wondering what plumbers and tinsmiths and tailors had to do with making a band, and not

knowing that the little German's idea of creating a small city band was most feasible, retreated.

"Und Herr Colonel! Ven do ve out go?" demanded Schmidt.

"To-morrow morning, Sir," the Colonel answered, smiling happily.

The "Herr Director" rushed over to his men, and began in rapid Bavarian to tell them of their good fortune, and they gathered around him, and shouted, and asked excited questions. The lugubrious man looked deserted and forlorn; but rallied.

"Say, Boss," he said, crowding over toward the Colonel, "I'm Slivers, de guy that spieled the calliope you bought with that other junk. Any chance for me? I've got all the hot rags and a lot of good stuff like "Sweet Violets," and "Silver Threads," and—and "Dixie," and—"

The Colonel leaped with gladness, and thrust out his hand.

"Fine! Fine!" he shouted. "Can you play in the band, also? You see, we want a calliope sometimes, but, when you aren't playing there, maybe you could—"

"Played alto horn all me life," solemnly asserted the calliope-player. "Um-tahtah! Um-tahtah! Um-tahtah!" he hummed through his pursed lips, twisting his mouth until it looked more like a closed oyster-shell than anything human. "And yuh kin git me cheap! Fifty per, and me sleeps trown in in de club-house!"

"Excellent," said the Colonel. "Most excellent! You can come, also!"

He might have said more, had not the members

of the band swooped down on him to thank him, all talking at once, all excited, and all eager to hasten to the land of promise, Port Hatch. He almost fought his way out, good-naturedly, before he was checked by Schmidt.

"Herr Colonel," he said, "I must talk! Herr Colonel! Vere do ve—?"

"Come with me, Mister Smith," said the Colonel, rather embarrassed by the members of the band, as he dodged out to the pavement.

The band-master, after commanding his followers to remain behind until he returned, hastened after the Colonel, and talked to him from the edge of the curb, with his faded red cap under one arm and the clarionet under the other.

"Ve must music haf! Und music-racks! Und vere to go know."

The Colonel looked at him thoughtfully and it suddenly dawned on him that the uniforms of the men were not entirely satisfactory.

"You shall buy them all, Mister Smith, Sir," he pronounced, after a moment's thought, and then, with a grandiose wave of his hand befitting a magnate, added; "and you had better go right down to some place, and get some new suits of clothes. I like gray with silver braid the best. Lots of braid, Mister Smith. And maybe you can get a few more men, if you need them."

Herr Schmidt staggered against a lamp-post for support, and rallied bravely.

"I can some men get vat var mit de circus oudt," he exclaimed. "Bud de money?"

"Get them, Sir," said the Colonel, suddenly

plunging, as the glory of a bigger band invaded his mind. "Get them. I will arrange their pay in Port Hatch. Buy them uniforms and music. Have them down at Schwabacher's wharf by nine o'clock to-morrow morning to go aboard the boat. Be sure to be there. Don't fail. And here is some money you may need for the new clothes."

He took a roll of bills from his pocket, enough to buy more than would ever be required, and magnanimously pressed it into the hands of Herr Schmidt, who counted the sum over almost automatically, and promised to account for every cent. It was well for the Colonel that he had, unawares, stumbled upon an honest man, for the little Bavarian was that, and, moreover, was drunk with opportunity to rehabilitate himself. He stood on the street with his hat off, in a reverential attitude, until the Colonel had disappeared from sight, before he turned toward the dingy doors of the saloon where faces stared at him that were as astonished as his own.

The Colonel entertained not the least anxiety for his outlay, or as to whether the band would appear, and fortunately was not disappointed when he reached the dock on the following morning, but was saluted from the steamer's deck by "Hail to the Chief," a surprise carefully arranged by Herr Schmidt. The Colonel gasped with delight when he saw the rehabilitated band, and was also amazed at the volumes of sound. And well he might be; for Herr Schmidt, given a free hand, had gathered at least fifteen more musicians, most of them from the defunct "Buzzard's Big Show," and had rehearsed

them from dawn for this occasion. Herr Schmidt himself, resplendent in a field marshall's uniform, had discarded his clarionet for the baton, and waved energetic and pompous German time. Also, later, he explained that it would cost the Colonel an additional six hundred dollars a month until his men could get "chobs" at whatever they could find to do to piece out their incomes; but there was something so grateful, so joyous, so self-satisfied, in the demeanor of the little band-master, and something so resplendent, so noisy, so glorious in the band, that the Colonel regretted only that Herr Schmidt had not been able to hire more than four and twenty men.

Down on the main deck, the camel seemed to cling for protection closer to the elephant, and the famous Zo-Zo was heaving chunks of raw meat at the jaguar. The chariot was being brought aboard, and Slivers, "de guy wot spieled," methodically polished up the long brass whistles of his calliope. He, too, had on a suit of cadet gray with silver braid in profusion. All were happy. Every one was excited, save the animals. They looked out with sorrowful eyes as if expecting nothing in a dreary existence save travel—endless, aimless travel.

As the boat pulled out and started toward the city of destiny, the Colonel devoted his time to the monkeys, and robbed himself of peanuts while winning their friendship. From the deck above came the sounds of Herr Schmidt's band as it hammered and banged through some later popular marches, and every now and then there came a pause, and the Director's voice, in guttural German oaths, was

heard in expostulations. Herr Schmidt, at least, took his new band seriously, and, to the surprise of some of the recruits, proved that, when he chose to be serious, he was a most competent drill-master. Forgotten music returned to him, and with it a desire to show his efficiency. He really had his own band, at last, and with the promise of a future. He must get it whipped into some sort of shape before the marvelous city of Port Hatch was reached. Nor was he the only one that had taken a new start, for, down below, Zo-Zo was anxiously doing his best to make his cages look presentable, all the while regretting that he had not had time to touch up the chariot before this strange venture into a new life. Slivers, after having spent his last cent among the stokers, now furtively stole coal for his boilers. He had no doubt that there would at once be a parade. He caught the Colonel in front of the animals, and voiced his conjecture.

"Do we start at once, Boss?" he asked. "How are we goin' to parade to the Park without no hosses?"

The Colonel looked at Slivers for a half-minute in a daze, and was then fired by the idea. How had he ever overlooked that important feature! He grew nervous, and began to make plans. He was sorry that he had not bought horses to haul the cages. Seven teams of horses! Maybe he could get these from where they would be at work on the new wharf grading, and surprise Port Hatch. It must be done, regardless of cost. Until Port Hatch was sighted, he was apprehensive. He pranced up and down as the boat neared the far from crowded docks.

Three teams were there in sight, and over beyond were four more. He leaped off before the gang-plank had touched the wharf, and rushed to the drivers. He hustled them into activity, and they, knowing his erratic ways, and certain of reward, responded with alacrity. The crowd began to grow on the wharf, and Zo-Zo took advantage of this circumstance, and ordered men to help him pull out his cages. There followed all the hurried, but not the orderly, excitement of the arrival of a circus. The horses were hastily unhooked from plow, scraper and wagon, and hitched to the unaccustomed vehicles. The band-men climbed up and spread themselves over the chariot to which it was found necessary to attach four horses. An old teamster, with a blue shirt and battered derby hat, announced that he had handled fours on a stage-line, hoisted himself up and took the reins. There was a scramble when the kindly camel tried to bite the man who volunteered to lead him in the parade to the Zoölogical Garden, and the Colonel proudly mounted to a seat beside the driver of the chariot. He sustained a pang of regret because he had not hired a hundred-thousand-dollar beauty for the seat of honor. All being ready, he grandly waved his hand for a start. The procession moved slowly away from the docks.

On Main Street, Arabella with Lester had been walking slowly along after doing some light shopping in the new stores, and the two had now been joined by Burmah Jones and Hubbard. On a sudden, they discerned signs of excitemnt at the far end of the street. Men began running here and

there, and women thrust heads from windows. Girl clerks appeared on the stoops of the shops, and individuals shouted to one another to know whether it was a fire, or a riot that threatened the "City Beautiful." Arabella and her companions paused, and began to ask questions, and Burmah Jones wondered whether some cataclysm had not appeared to overwhelm the city.

Abruptly, from a band burst a blare of sound, and into the head of the street swung the chariot, with the Colonel on the seat. He bowed and smiled to right and left, as pleased as a boy with a splendid new toy. The driver sat squattily beside him with his dented derby hat down over his ears, controlling with a masterful hand horses that were frightened by this sudden noise behind them. Herr Schmidt's cheeks were distended as, intent on creating all the hubbub possible for his advent, he added the shrill clamor of his clarionet. The drivers on top of the animal cages grinned their appreciation of this unexpected honor, and Zo-Zo trudged beside the elephant with hook in hand. The camel had settled to his long awkward stride, and in the calliope at the rear end Slivers watched the steam-gauge rise to the popping point, and wished the band would finish. Finally in desperation, he climbed up to the keys, and sent the jerky strains of "Sweet Violets" out to join the clamor, regardless of the fact that the band, but a short distance ahead, was bravely pumping away at the latest Sousa march. The coyote found lungs to bark a shrill, painful bark, and even the hyena had sufficient appreciation of the situation to vent a cackling laugh at Port Hatch.

And Port Hatch was astonished, then convulsed.

And Port Hatch was first astonished, then convulsed!

As the Colonel came abreast of his daughter and her companions, he recognized them and stood up and bowed and waved a frantic hand, beckoning them to follow the big parade. Burmah staggered back against the nearest building, and said, slowly, and with great disgust:

"Well, I'll be damned!"

Arabella went through all the emotions of curiosity, astonishment and perplexity, and ended with an appreciation of the ridiculous. She laughed until tears streamed from her eyes, and clung to Lester's arm for support. Lester burst into a shout of amusement that could be heard by all those near by, and Hubbard scowled savagely at the pageant, then brightened when he surmised that all this must be destined for the roomy concrete animal dens he had so painstakingly supervised in the new Park. Quite whimsically, he regretted that he had not built an extra den for the Colonel himself.

The residents of Port Hatch abandoned shops and work, and crowded into the road. Carpenters and masons hurriedly descended ladders, and joined the throng, so that the whole population of Port Hatch was on hand to witness the Colonel's triumph. The Colonel waved his hand commandingly to Herr Schmidt, and the latest Sousa march came to a stammering halt in which the second trombone and the drums shared the final tone. Slivers, out of steam, stopped in the midst of a wailing strain, and looked out toward the front of the procession.

"Friends and Fellow Citizens of Port Hatch, the

fairest of cities, gather round me," shouted the Colonel, oratorically, as he stood on his feet, bareheaded, and gazed down at them from his lofty perch. "This day marks an epoch in the history of our beloved city. A zoölogical garden is an education for the young, a delight for the old, and a source of constant entertainment for the middle-aged. No city can achieve true greatness without one. We have here the beginning of what shall be the most distinguished exhibit of modern times, and I take the utmost pleasure in presenting it to you, with the hearty wish that it may prove a fountain of never ceasing gratification and entertainment. I have the rare pleasure of surprising you, and of knowing that you appreciate my efforts in your behalf. I have secured a most unsuspected bargain, for it is rarely that a man has the blessed opportunity to acquire, at one time, such a magnificent collection of animals as those I am about to install in our beautiful garden. I have also the pleasure of informing you that I have engaged, permanently, the services of a master musician and his right-excellent organization, Mister Smith, who will hereafter lend this city of ours the inspiration of divine music. As has been so aptly said by the great poet, 'He who hath not music in his soul, is fit for stratagems, for treason and for spoils.' I know that there is none in our midst to whom this can apply. We will now repair to the new Park, and liberate our charges."

He sat down, and as he did so waved his hand toward Herr Schmidt, and spoke to the driver with the dented derby. The band struck into the inspir-

ing strains of "Kippers for Tea"—but not before Slivers, succumbing to habit, had bawled out in a raucous voice:

"Follow the parade to the show-grounds, Ladies and Gentlemen, where a grand free exhibition will take place."

Immediately after, with a full head of steam, he selected, "There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town To-night," and did his utmost to drown the noise of the band as the procession moved forward.

The whole street seemed to rock with it, and Arabella, still laughing, and Burmah, scowling, were carried along in the swirl of humanity. The elephant, gouged by Zo-Zo, shuffled forward in the rear of the lion's cage, and the camel slowly moved his rheumatic joints, and sagged ahead as if tired of everything in the world. The hyena once more vented a howl, and to Burmah it sounded like a laugh of overmastering ridicule for the "whole blooming show.". . . . . "Buzzard's Biggest" had come to rest.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AND THE KNAVE RUNS AWAY.

Spring had come again, glorious with green robes patterned with flowers. The Conover syndicate had taken up the work of advertising the town more extensively than Burmah found himself able to do, and the whole United States was familiar with that map showing the proposed route of the Atlantic & Oriental Railway, its lines heavy, black and straight, and running toward Port Hatch with a directness indicating that they never by any possibility could swerve elsewhere. Day by day, the real line had crept across Montana and Idaho, and the State of Washington had granted it a charter to come to tidewater "at a point to be later named." Adroitly had the Conover crowd and Burmah indicated to possible purchasers that, if the line had ever intended to go to Seattle or Tacoma it would have so stated, and that, logically, Port Hatch was the terminus intended.

Port Hatch was one of the best-advertised cities on the Pacific Coast, and Colonel Hatch, with his eccentricities, had become a nationally known character. He was good copy, and good copy, too, that Burmah had not hesitated to use, although he spent weary hours when alone, "cussing" the Colonel for being a fine old fool. Port Hatch had become more than a frontier town; it was a thriving little city, built on the sands of hope, and Burmah Jones the only one who knew that its foundation was a

lie. From that very day when he had resolved to "stick it out," he had never announced as a certainty that the railway was coming there. There were some two or three hundred persons who wondered at this reticence, when remembering his bald statements made in the beginning, but Fate had taken a hand in Burmah's behalf, and the railway slowly advanced toward the Coast. He was making a hard fight, every hour of his life, and his mind lay as a battle-ground between his newly discovered integrity and his old habits of "gettin' the money, no matter how!" Added to this was the distress of having come at last to the one obstacle he had ever met in his career that could not be surmounted, avoided, or left behind. That obstacle was the Colonel's extravagance—for the conspiracy had failed, absolutely.

The Colonel had given Port Hatch two or three other gratifying surprises. The first, by building a concert-hall for Herr Schmidt's band, with adjoining club- and living-rooms for the musicians, and Herr Schmidt, in the ecstasy of creation, had gathered together a most creditable organization, such a one as would have shamed the band he brought to Port Hatch just seven months before. His dream of plumbers, tailors, and tin-smiths had been realized, and, Fate again dealing kindly with him, the band had made a concert-trip along the Coast, a trip which had been highly successful. Little Billy, loaned for this enterprise, had proven a most adept manager, and Pick, who took a vacation long enough to act as press-agent, thus saved the Colonel's purse some few thousands of dollars.

Then, again, the Colonel presented the city with

beautiful baths down at the water's edge, where in winter young men might disport themselves in artificially heated water beneath a colored-glass dome. A new fire-engine-house, also, with its ornamental front and elegant rooms above, he gave. It was the Colonel who bought the automobile fire-apparatus, and a fine line of uniforms and equipment. It was the Colonel who caused to be constructed a miniature house in the Park. It was the Colonel who had the alarm turned in for the first fire in Port Hatch, and it was the Colonel who had then ridden, gaily whooping, to see that fire extinguished, and have the company's efficiency demonstrated. The city was the best lighted of its size in the world, putting forth a profligate display of street clusters on ornamental pillars of concrete, because the Colonel had presented Port Hatch with an electric light-plant, run by power from high up in the mountains. At night, the city's water-front glowed like a fairy land, and Marquard Villa shone far over the sound to the astonishment of strange voyagers.

Hubbard wrought well, and had refused a position as chief architect for a world's fair; of the proffer, not a word escaped him until after it became known in Port Hatch, because he was still desperately in love with the "City Beautiful," and, incidentally, with Arabella. Burmah's last futile stand with the Colonel came when the latter announced that he would yet build the marble opera-house. On that night, Burmah had risen to tempestuous heights in his embarrassment.

"We talked of that once before, Colonel. You promised to chop down expenses. Then what did

you do? Humph! You went and bought a lousy menagerie and a Dutch band. You brought 'em home with a calliope that you finally had play every Saturday afternoon for the children in the Park. Hubbard goes to work and builds a band-stand. Before it's done, you tell him you've got to have it moved to the back end of the Park near the animals' dens, because you don't want the poor captives, exiled far from the fastness of their native heaths, and brought like slaves to our grand and magnificent city, to be robbed of their share of the music, which the poet declares 'hath charms to sooth the savage breast.' "

He had given a fine and exact imitation of the Colonel's speech on that occasion, and the Colonel winced a trifle at the recollection.

"Then what happens?" Burmah had asked, shaking a pudgy fist aloft. "You have the band-stand built over again. The band, under that old beer-tub, Smith, gets into it, and hits up a rag-time march, and the poor damn' exiles gets up on their hind legs, and howls their heads off, and is so scared they tries to bite the bars down so they can get at them Dutchmen, and tear their heads off! Then what do you do? You shake your head, and say the poet must have been mistaken, and promptly order the band-stand torn down and moved out to the front end of the Park again, so the 'poor home-sick exiles won't be grieved by the dulcet strains so reminiscent of the wind through the gorgeous jungles whence they came'."

Again, the Colonel had squirmed at this adroit mimicry.

Burmah had implored, threatened, cajoled, warned and stormed, in his efforts to curb the Colonel's outlay; but he might as well have whistled the wind down. Always the Colonel had been either furiously dignified, or readily acquiescent, and always the end had been the same. More lots were sold, at constantly increasing prices, the Colonel had been given his half of the proceeds, and always he found some new method of expenditure. And so, on this May morning, Port Hatch was in reality the "City Beautiful." Colonel Hatch was sitting in his library, dreamily wishing that another sale would be made because his bank-balance was down to three thousand dollars, Arabella was taking a horseback ride with Lester, and Burmah Jones, with a few more gray hairs in his head, was standing in the overhanging window above the Port Hatch Land Offices, and staring moodily up the street. Gay with flower-boxes were the shop buildings, due to the Hatch Cup, for which everyone vied, it being offered by the Colonel as an annual prize for the best business floral display. Gay with flowers were the electric light-pillars, on each of which stood an ornamental steel flower-box, high above the street, resplendent with blossoming flowers and drooping vines. A half-dozen boats now stopped at Port Hatch on their daily rounds, for it was the show city of Puget Sound, and the bellowing of their arrival no longer stirred the little city to a state of curious excitement. Boats came and went, regularly, and not infrequently excursion steamers deposited chattering crowds to view the much advertised model city of the world. The keepers of curio-shops were the only ones that kept

the schedules, for all who came carried away the Indian souvenirs, the miniature totem-poles, the glass paper-weights with pictures of Colonel Hatch on the fire-engine, and the beautiful views of the "quaintest city on the American continent."

Burmah, standing at the window, and worried over the Colonel's latest announcement, heard the whistle of an in-coming boat, and wondered if it brought more investors. A short time later, he lifted his head as does a starved hound scenting meat, and screwed his eyebrows into a penetrating stare, as he saw a group of men slowly walking along Main Street, and scrutinizing its beauties. Then, when they were almost beneath his window, one of the men looked up, and Burmah, with a start, hastily drew back into the room and out of sight, and his face suddenly lost color and expressed fear.

"Thornton!" he exclaimed. "Old man Thornton that I buncoed out of thirty thousand dollars on a fake reclamation scheme in Florida. And with him is Carleton that I got for ten thousand in the Chicago title game! And Sprague that I trimmed on the Pawnee-reservation sale! All here in Port Hatch! It's the finish! I must duck!"

With surprising agility, he stepped to the private telephone that led to the offices below, and called up Little Billy.

"If anyone asks for me to-day, say that I'm not here," he ordered. "And tell 'em that I've gone to Seattle for three or four days. Understand? All right! Remember—three or four days!"

Then he slipped back to the window, and was relieved when he saw the group of men who had

so disturbed him still sauntering nonchalantly up the street, and staring at the beauty of the buildings that Hubbard had created. He jumped to his dresser, and took from it three or four photographs, the gold toilet-set that Arabella had given him as a Christmas present, his bank-books, and some other little personal belongings. Next, he hurried into his luxurious bath-room, and snatched up what he wanted from there, then paused in front of his clothes-closet. One suit he took and threw it into a suit-case, after looking regretfully at the others.

"I can buy more," he muttered, and closed the door. "No time to lose, if I want to catch the boat on its return trip. Got to hustle now! The game's finished!"

In five minutes, he was walking down the street with his suit-case in his hand, apparently the same busy little man so familiar to every one in Port Hatch. As he walked, he glanced neither to right nor left, but kept his eyes straight ahead, and his lips tightly shut; for even in his panic he had time to regret this catastrophe of a blackened past, lifting itself to confront him in his prosperity. He dared not look at the street he had come to admire and love. He was afraid that moisture would rise to his eyes. Sentiment he had always hated. He dared not look back its length for a farewell, as he came to the point where the road dipped sharply down along the edge of the cliff. He dared not lift his eyes toward the point where, like a crown, stood Marquard Villa. He plunged onward down the path with ever hurrying steps to board the boat, and escape the exposure that he knew certainly

must come. They could do nothing to him through the law, but they could expose his past, and leave him standing naked in his ignominy, before these citizens of Port Hatch who had trusted him, and regarded him as the soul of business honor. And from that nudity he fled.

"Wait! Wait!" he shouted as, perspiring and breathing heavily, he ran out on the wharf, just as the boat's gang-plank was being lifted. The officer on the bridge, recognizing him as the important Burmah Jones, ordered it lowered away, and watched as he ran up it.

"Close shave, Sir," he called down, in the friendly greeting that is always accorded men of affairs.

But Burmah did not reply. He gave his suit-case to an obsequious steward, and walked aft as the boat swung away from the wharf, and headed toward Seattle. He was glad that he was alone, to think, to regret, and to take his parting look at the city that he had built, at the white little palace on the hill that gleamed through the trees on one side, and hung suspended from the cliff on the other. In it he had been honored and respected. There was the room devoted to his needs, always, a room he had so seldom occupied. There was the pagoda where he had so frequently laughed with Arabella, who had taken to calling him "Uncle Burmah." There was the terrace where he had so many times expostulated with the Colonel, who loved him as a brother, and believed in him as he did in his own success. There was the court where the boys from Chattanooga had tried to teach him tennis on idle evenings, when the sun painted the Olympics purple

and red as the world swung away from its benevolent stare. Out in the sound, the steamer passed a smart little sloop, and Skaggs, at the helm, recognizing him, waved a friendly hand. Up beyond was Todd's lumber-yard, now grown to mammoth proportions, and it reminded him of Bill Todd, the humble sacrifice to love and loyalty, who had poured his heart out to him, and had won his protection. Todd, Skaggs, the boys from Chattanooga, Arabella, the Colonel—all—everyone—would know by to-morrow that he was a crook, a scalawag, an adventurer, a liar, a confidence man! His past had come to tear him down, and the men he had swindled had come to expose him. What was the use in trying to be "on the level!" Despite himself, his gray eyes were moist and filled with regret when the steamer rounded a bend, and a long wooded tongue cut the site of victory and of hope from view.

Strange events were working themselves out in Port Hatch on that day of May, as if the loose threads were being drawn together by some inscrutable and master hand. Lester, riding care-free and contented beside Arabella, seemed involved. He rode his horse with a firm hand, and laughter and happiness were blended in his eyes as they came galloping down the mountain road from the reservoir, homeward bound.

"I'm so hungry, that I can scarcely wait for the luncheon-hour," announced Arabella, as they pulled their mounts down to a breathing walk. "You must come on up with me, and assist in destruction. There's cold ham, and cold tongue, and cold kippers, and a salad that only Uncle Jeff can make, and—"

"But hadn't I better go home first, and get rid of the dust?" he inquired.

"No, Sir. That's nonsense. The peck of dirt theory, you know! Besides, you can wash and clean just as well at our house as anywhere, because we aren't barbarians, you know. We have several very fine wash-bowls."

"But that wouldn't give me an excuse to hang around all the afternoon," he insisted. "And if I go home first, then you have no excuse to get rid of me."

"Who said we wanted to?" she asked, without looking up.

"I should think you would," he suggested, looking at her with a desperate eagerness in his eyes. "You know, I am the one who almost lives at Marquard. And I think you know why. Don't you?"

"Oh, fudge!" she exclaimed, smiling at him. "That's what they all say. For goodness' sake, be sensible! It's getting so that the only one I like to see is Uncle Burmah. He always proposes marriage, and then says he will expect an answer in three days, and then forgets all about it when the three days are up."

Lester's eyes suddenly took on a harsh look, and he rode a little stiffly as they debouched into the Main Street. And then, coming toward them, they saw the group of men that had arrested Burmah's attention. The men, with Thornton at their head, were walking close together, and engrossed in some argument. Involuntarily, Lester's hand tightened on the reins, and his mouth shut into a straight line. He scowled at the men as if to make certain of

their identity; then his horse suddenly reared, pivoted on its hind hoofs, swung an angry head, and leaped off into a side street. To all appearances the animal was intent on bolting, and Lester had a hard time to control it.

Arabella, at first amused, then solicitous, as the animal disappeared from sight, turned her horse's head, and galloped in pursuit. When she succeeded in overtaking him, she found him quieting the horse by stroking the wet neck, and speaking soothingly.

He swung out of the saddle, and examined the girths.

"What on earth was the matter?" demanded Arabella, reining in beside him.

"Must have been something wrong with the girths, I think," said Lester, carelessly, as he caught his reins, and vaulted into the saddle again. "But, inasmuch as we are this far along the side street, we might as well go ahead this way, mightn't we?"

Arabella assented and started forward, all unconscious that the cause of the horse's leap had been that the animal was suddenly pricked heavily with the spur, and that Mr. Lester was extremely hopeful that none of the group of men had had time to recognize him.

CHAPTER XIX.

TO BE MASTERED BY HONESTY.

Burmah Jones, the first step of flight passed, and standing alone outside the smoking-room of the steamer, became conscious of the vigorous voices of men above him, and looked up to see the captain and the chief officer leaning over the wing of the bridge.

"You can bet your last dollar on one thing," declared the skipper, "that if I had been on the examining board I'd have done more than throw him on the beach. You see, his tug had a tow of scows, and, when the storm came up, he left those poor devils to go down, and ran for a port. The fact that the scows outlasted the storm, and that they were picked up by another boat, proves that Captain Ritter could have stood by."

"That's the way I look at it, too," asserted the chief officer. "That man was a quitter! That's what he was! And there ain't any man in the world as rotten as a quitter. Somehow, you can forgive a pick-pocket, or a murderer, in most cases, but there's no one has any use for a quitter! It's a pity they couldn't have sent Ritter to the pen."

Burmah suddenly decided that some other portion of the deck would be more congenial, and he moved away; but the echo of the voices still followed him with accusation, insistently repeating honest men's opinions of such as he. And, then,

he began to wonder at himself, and to ponder the situation, dully holding a tribunal of the soul in which he put himself on trial, one half of himself the prosecutor, the other half the defendant. His brain felt tired, and he was not certain that the game of life was worth playing, after all. He knew that he now had sufficient money to retire for the remainder of his days, retreating to some place where he was unknown, and where he hoped to be respected; but always there came again from his ample reservoirs of common-sense the certain knowledge that, wherever he went, there would be fear that some one would come who knew him, and would expose him for what he was, a "quitter"—a man who had betrayed his best friend by running away when everything was at stake! He began a closer analysis of his flight. It came as a surprise to find that it was not actuated so much by the certain humiliation of meeting his victims, and being stripped of reputation by their charges, as through fear of facing Arabella, the Colonel, Hubbard, and the quartet from Chattanooga. It was the scorn of those he loved that made him a coward. As for what Thornton, Sprague and Carleton might have said, he would have listened to them, grinned, and said:

"Well, what are you goin' to do about it, now that you've told what easy marks you were? You've got nothin' on me for the courts, you know."

But those others! He knew, now, that he was hungry for the esteem and affection of clean persons, right-thinking persons, persons who never faltered where honor was involved. Moreover, he was sure

that never again in the world could he find such as those he left behind. All their failings now became amusing, and all their virtues magnified. Even Hubbard's genius he recognized as being something big and worthy. The Colonel, financial simpleton that he was, loomed in Burmah's memory as a giant of kindly nobility, one too fine to be tarnished by the sordidness of greed, too big and sincere to be trammeled by conventions.

But how had these former dupes of his learned that he was there in Port Hatch? It could not have been chance alone that had worked to this end. Yet, chance might have set a sign-post for his undoing, despite all his efforts. He had fought throughout, as was his habit, to keep in the background, and to keep his name out of the newspapers; but, despite his utmost care and self-effacement, the newspapers had come to regard him as the central figure in the limelight of achievement, and to refer to the Colonel only in a good-natured, whimsical way whenever the latter had perpetrated some new extravaganza. This must be the manner in which Thornton and the others had learned of his presence in Port Hatch. Millionaires that they were, they might have left alone one so humble as Burmah Jones; but that trait of "getting even" seemed to be a pretty general one, from which his victims were not immune. Also, Burmah admitted, they might be acting from a sense of duty—the duty of preventing other men from becoming his dupes. They might have been visiting Seattle, picked up a newspaper, made a few inquiries, and then believed it an obligation to visit Port Hatch,

and notify its residents, the Colonel, everyone, to beware. They would find one person, at least, ready to listen to them, and that was Lester.

At the thought of the keen-eyed young man who had seemed to read his motives, Burmah got up from the capstan where he had been sitting, and walked impatiently to and fro the narrow width of the deck, his short legs moving restlessly, and his short feet, with their patent-leather shoes and white gaiters, almost twinkling as they struck the planks.

"Who in the deuce can Lester be, anyhow?" he asked himself, in perplexity. "Where did he come from? He was there fishin' the first time we saw him, and had old Skaggs and Flay for his only friends, and I sort of got the idea that he was just a ten-dollar-a-week clerk out on a vacation. Then he made me think he was there for his health, and liked the out-doors stuff. But he's been there now more'n a year and a half, save for a trip off somewhere about once in three or four months, and he never seems to have money to blow around the club, and he ain't never short of money, and he don't do nothin' at all except to make love to Arabella, and—hang him! I wonder if he had a finger in this game!"

For quite a time, he debated this feature, and at last came to the conclusion that Lester could be nothing more than a dawdler of just sufficient income to live modestly in some isolated situation like Port Hatch. Chance alone had brought on the crash of the card-castle he had erected, and in which he had lived so long, so successfully, and so happily.

The boat drew slowly into the dock at Seattle,

and Jones, with suit-case in hand, walked down the gang-plank, and was so abstracted that he failed to recognize the captain's friendly parting salute, or to deliver his scant luggage to the porter who had always welcomed him as a friend. He passed across the tracks to the railway station, and frowned at the time-tables conveniently hung in frames for the benefit of the travelers, and his sharp eyes ran rapidly down the column devoted to through trains, eastward bound. Once more he was the old Burmah Jones, again covering his tracks. He must first take a local train bound for a near-by station, then suddenly appear to change his mind, drop off, catch a through train, and disappear. There were plently of trains that would serve his purpose, and he made a mental selection. This done, he must go to the different banks in which he had scattered his deposits, and draw as closely as he dared, and he was already formulating the glib excuse which had so often served him—that of requiring cash to satisfy an unreasonable customer. Also, he would drop the hint, in an off-hand way, that the bank might be compelled to meet some drafts should he be called East. Then from Chicago he would draw upon them for the larger sums, and from there also would telegraph the Colonel that he had been unexpectedly called away on a big deal, and would return within two or three weeks. Those two or three weeks would give him time to get away to South America, or Europe, before the smash, in case the Colonel still had some shred of faith in him, and of that he had small doubt. He knew that the Colonel would decline to believe anything ill of

him until he had been given a chance to defend himself. He laughed at himself for these precautions, for quite well he realized that he had done nothing unlawful; yet he had the craving to retain the confidence of those at Port Hatch to the last possible moment—that confidence he found himself loath to part with.

A strange indecision mastered him as he turned out to visit the first bank, and, at the very doors of the big granite building facing Pioneer Square, he paused irresolute. No, he would first go to the Commercial Bank, where he had so long cultivated the friendship of William Shoemaker, the cashier. He could "get away with it" better there, because they believed in him. Then, at the doors of the Commercial, he thought of the trust granted him by that same clear-eyed little cashier, and hated to betray it. Here was another man who believed in him. Better try some other bank, because he wanted Shoemaker to respect him as long as possible. He decided to leave the suit-case at a cigar-stand, and in this palace of nicotine found himself compelled to listen to a conversation between two old Alaskan prospectors telling how a pair of partners had lost their lives.

"Everything showed," one of them, a gray-haired and long-bearded old man, said in the quiet voice of the adventurer in the silent places; "everything showed that Tim could have saved himself, but he wouldn't go and leave Miller there to die alone. We found where he had trailed out trying to find a cache or some sort of help. Then the trail came back. Tim was returning to Miller to die with

him, and, somehow, I've an idea he must have known it. God! Think of it! Going back to die rather than feel that he hadn't stuck to the end. That was playing the part of a man. It looked as if Miller had died, and then Tim had lashed him up in a tree, and started out alone; but he couldn't make it by that time—was too weak. So we found him, and read his story there in the still snows that hadn't drifted none in all that long month. That was a man!"

For a full minute, Burmah leaned over, staring at, yet without seeing, the gay bands and labels. His fat hands rested quietly, and without a tremor, on the scratched glass top of the show-case. Then his eyes suddenly flared. He whirled until he looked at the prospector, and scowled at him fiercely, as if resenting something, and, while the old man drew back, perplexed, Burmah spoke scarcely above a whisper:

"Your friend, Tim," he said, with unusual slowness, "was a chump! But—hell!—he was a man!" He stooped with an awkward, abrupt motion, and picked up the suit-case, and walked out to the pavement, with lips that were curiously compressed, and with a fearless glare in his eyes, and, strangely, his short figure had taken on a dignity of its own. He walked unwaveringly back through the long street, and turned toward the waters of the sound that glistened far below. Then he plunged downward along the incline and out past the railway station to the wharf, where the boat that had brought him to Seattle now made ready to depart on her upward trip. All indecision had gone from his

action and his appearance. He held his head high on his short neck, which seemed to have become a stubborn pillar, unyielding and fixed. His hat had lost its careless angle, and his hands were clenched, one tightly as if for a fight, the other around the leather handle of his suit-case. Over the gang-plank so recently descended in irresolution, he strode firmly back, and the suit-case he tossed carelessly inside the smoking-room door.

"Going back so soon, Mister Jones?" asked a friendly deck-steward, and for a long time the man wondered why Burmah Jones turned and smiled at him, slowly, and said:

"Yes. Goin' back. Goin' back to be a man!"

He waited for the boat to pull out, cursing himself for ever having run away, but giving himself no credit for having come out on top in the moral battle he had fought with himself. His air was that of dogged determination. He stood leaning on the rail, when a voice, panting as if from exertion, hailed him from the dock's edge, and he looked down to find Billings waving at him.

"Mister Jones! Mister Jones!" shouted the manager of his Seattle office. "I was about to come to see you at Port Hatch when I spotted you up there on the deck. Can't you stay over here to-day to talk to some men who want to do business with you personally?"

For an instant, Burmah hesitated, a fact that did not escape the eye of his subordinate, who never before had seen him display indecision.

"What's their names?" asked Burmah, cautiously.

"I don't remember," said Billings, "but they said

they were in business back East with the same scheme that Conover and his crowd worked on, and they want to see you."

Burmah caught himself faltering. For a moment, he had been inclined to dodge the possible issue of meeting Thornton and Carleton. Again he shut his jaw grimly, and mastered temptation. He would meet all comers after this, no matter what happened, and, if the men who wanted to see him were those whom in another portion of the country he had mulcted, the sooner he confronted them the better. Then a second's thought convinced him they could not be the men. He reclaimed his suit-case, joined Billings, and took a cab to the offices of the Port Hatch Company, where he busied himself at his desk until such time as the strangers should appear.

They came late in the afternoon, three more of the same quiet type as Conover, and Burmah was relieved to discover that all they wanted of him was to buy for their own speculations a subdivision of the "City Beautiful." For the first time in all his big deals, he was unqualifiedly honest and straightforward.

"I want to tell you somethin' before we start in to discuss this sale at all," he said, with an unusual repression, "and that is, that we do not sell any land with the promise, or anything more than a hope, that the railroad's goin' to ever come there to Port Hatch."

He waited and watched the effect of his speech, as his visitors straightened up with surprise, and then looked at one another, dumfounded. He was again fighting the battle, but this time from a new

angle. If he neglected to make a sale of possible magnitude, his action would be working an injustice to the Colonel, and he smiled sadly at the thought that without doubt at the very moment the Colonel needed money. Tempation was now upon him to go ahead and with all his old time vigor to close this transaction, and turn the proceeds over to the Colonel; but he sternly questioned himself, in that flashing instant, whether this was not at variance with the course he had that morning set for himself. He stiffened a trifle around the jaws, and his lips shut in harsh lines.

"But we have been led to understand that there was never any question of the railway's decision," objected the spokesman for the prospective purchasers. "Your advertising was quite—"

"Never mind the advertisements," interrupted Burmah. "There are—" he faltered a little, and his visitor took up the thread.

"A change of conditions, eh?"

"As you see it," replied Burmah.

"That's too bad!" exclaimed the visitor. "We came with our minds made up to take a flyer—say —a hundred thousand on Port Hatch; but, of course, if there is any doubt—well, you understand."

"Perfectly," said Burmah, wiping the moisture from his forehead. His voice was very low and restrained, as he added: "One must not sell land under false pretenses. Ten days ago, I'd have told you it was a cinch. To-day, I tell you there is no certainty, and that, if you size it up that you want to gamble with us, we've got the land for sale; but that, if you put your money in on my tellin' you

that I know that the road's comin' to Port Hatch, the deal's off!"

His visitors looked at one another in astonishment, and then their spokesman got up, and, as if this were understood by his partners as ending the interview, they did likewise. He suddenly stepped around the end of the desk, and held his hand out to Burmah.

"We've got to look this over some more, Mister Jones," he said, "because when it comes to a gamble, that's a different proposition. We'll let you know within a week whether we want to bet on the card that's turned down; but I want to say this, and I know I'm speaking just what my partners feel, that you are as square a man as we've ever tried to do business with, and we want to thank you for giving us what is unquestionably straight information. We would have closed with you within forty-eight hours, if you had said that you knew that the road was coming. And we want to thank you, and say that we don't believe a man who can do as you have done ever loses in the long run!"

He turned and walked out, after bowing punctiliously, and at the door said:

"Within a week, Mister Jones—within a week."

The door closed after them, and Burmah dropped into his chair, dejected, and scowling savagely at himself in the little mirror backing a fancy inkstand that had been given him by Billy. The old cynical smile crept back to his lips, the old hard look to his eyes.

"It's the stuff," he muttered, savagely, "that's passed out by preachers and soft guys. It'll get

before day after to-morrow, without hiring a special boat."

The Colonel looked like a boy that had unexpectedly lost his parental protector in a crowd. He shifted from one foot to the other, took off his hat, ran his fingers through his profuse white hair, and tugged at his goatee.

"Is there anything I can do, Colonel?" asked Billings, in his calm, methodical manner, and voiced the question in the same pitch that he would have used had he asked if the weather were satisfactory.

The Colonel brightened, looked at Billings as if about to ask him his advice, then shook his head.

"No, Sir, Mister Billings," he said, "a man must fight his own battles. As the great Mr. Rothschild said in one of his remarkable sayings, 'There comes a time when a man must make his own decisions.' I'm afraid I'll have to do without Mister Jones. But, by Cracky! I wish he was here!"

He went hesitatingly out of the door, and Billings, turning back to some columns of figures, smiled satirically, wondering whether Colonel Hatch could ever do anything without the advice of Burmah Jones, and, if he did, what the newest spendthrift phase would be. Colonel Hatch stopped to adjust his cravat in the hall-way, to pass the time of day with a boot-black, to give a dollar to a beggar who had asked for a dime, and then passed thoughtfully toward the largest hotel in Seattle. He mounted the steps, handed the clerk his card, and was respectfully greeted.

"I wish to see Mister Thornton, or Mister Carleton," he said. "By appointment, Sir."

The bell-boy took the card, and disappeared; and the Colonel came near to forgetting his errand while staring through his glasses at a picture in the hall-way that particularly pleased him, which at the same time suggested that Port Hatch should have an art-gallery for the education of the young before it could be classed as a thoroughly up-to-date city. His self-confidence had already led him to forget the desire for a consultation with Burmah, and he was placidly waiting for his call when the bell-boy came to him, and said that the gentlemen would see him at once. He followed the boy to the elevator, doffed his hat, and bowed punctiliously to an elderly matron who was waiting in the car, and told her that it was a fine day, as they slipped swiftly and silently upward. Into what appeared to be the private reception-room of a splendid suite the boy conducted him, and, while he waited, he looked out of the window at the city beneath him, and the marvelous panorama that stretched away in the distance—a panorama he had come to love as being neighbor to his own unsurpassed in the world. The inner door opened, and Carleton, well groomed, square-jawed, and precise, approached him.

"You are Colonel Hatch, I take it," he said, holding out his hand. "I'm Mister Carleton."

"Very glad to have the honor, Sir," the Colonel asserted with great gallantry.

"As I wrote you, Colonel," Carleton said, in his precise, business-like way, "we are on the Board of Directors of the Atlantic & Oriental Railway, and we are out here on the Coast to make our final decision as to what shall be the terminus of the road."

you no money, Old Man, and you are gettin' old. It'll send you to the hulks with the dead wood, when you're done. It'll put you in the potter's field after you're gone."

He paused for a moment and then his face took on a different, a more noble look, and he slapped his open palm on his desk as he said, aloud:

"But, by God! it'll give you at least one hack full of mourners when the game's ended, and somebody'll see that flowers grow on your three-by-six!"

To the astonishment of the office force and the matter-of-fact Billings, he whistled softly as he marched out of his private office on his departure for the hotel, and there rang a new note in that whistling of an old-time popular air that caught the ear. It echoed with a vague cadence out into the street where men hurried backward and forward in the busy city devoted to the god of wealth. It flaunted itself defiantly above the clamor of the street-cars. It dwelt in the memory of those who heard it and had forgotten its strains. It was the new marching tune of Burmah Jones—fat little crook, pathetic in his isolation of conscience, and now turning into an unaccustomed road, undaunted.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DREAMER UPSETS EVERYTHING.

The office door of the Port Hatch Land Company, in Seattle, flew open with a bang, and through it rushed Colonel Hatch, excited and anxious.

"Good-afternoon, Mister Billings," he called to the manager, who arose from his chair with an air of having been disturbed in the midst of some profound problem. And then, without waiting for a return of his greeting, the Colonel asked: "Where on earth is Mister Jones? I've been looking for him, and do you know, Sir, it's of the utmost importance that I have a conference with him before three o'clock this afternoon?"

Billings looked distressed and wagged his head.

"There are two reasons why I'm afraid that is impossible, Colonel," he answered; "one being that it's now a quarter-past three, and the other that Mister Jones took the boat to Port Hatch at one, thirty."

"Well dog-gone my cats!" exclaimed the Colonel, bursting into a vernacular oath of his native country. "Then we must have passed him on the way up."

"I'm afraid that's true," said Billings, still wondering what could be the cause of the Colonel's perturbation. "And I'm afraid that, if time is essential, he cannot be here before to-morrow evening, because the last boat for to-day has gone, and a letter would not reach him before to-morrow afternoon. On thinking it over, I doubt if he could be back here

"I gathered as much as that," said the Colonel, imperturbably; "but, for the life of me, Sir, I can't see why there should be the slightest question on that point. Port Hatch, of course, Sir. She is the most beautiful city in the world. She has the most unrivaled port of entry, with natural facilities that cannot be obtained by any other harbor on the Pacific. She is—"

"Excuse me, Colonel," blandly interrupted Carleton; "but I think it best that you should explain its advantages to the full Board, and particularly to our chairman, Mister Thornton. Won't you please come inside?"

He turned and bowed deferentially as he opened a door, and stood back as the Colonel preceded him into the room. As he was being announced, the Colonel caught it all at a glance. The afternoon sun filtered through the big windows on as model a directors' room as could be obtained in any hotel, and around a long and polished table were seated a dozen men of that type which he had always associated with financial power—clean-cut, serious men, some of whom had sharp eyes that bored him through and appeared on the defensive, others that were merely speculative, and some that with an icy blankness masked cruelty of mind. He passed from man to man as he was introduced, and shook hands with each, regardless of the attitude of defensiveness that all assumed. It was the Chairman who put the cause of the conference succinctly before him, as if time were too important to be wasted on courtesy, and the Colonel, somewhat bewildered by all this haste, listened as Thornton talked.

"Colonel Hatch," he said, after the Colonel had seated himself, "as you doubtless know, it is an assured fact that the A. and O. wants to make terms for its tide-water end; there is no use in discussing that part of it. We have preliminary surveys to Seattle that have been on file for some years; but we are not certain that it would not prove more profitable for us to make Port Hatch, on account of its nearer location to the mouth of the sound, our main terminus, and extend the line to Seattle merely as a business-getter."

The Colonel smiled and nodded with elation. He glowed with friendship for the man at the head of the table, whose face was as immobile as a face could be, and whose close-cropped mustache did not conceal a mouth that was as unfeeling and firm as a Red Indian's.

"We have felt out the cost of right of way to Seattle, and know about what we could do along that line. We have not such assurances along the line to Port Hatch and that would entail some additional expense." He paused for a moment for this to sink in.

But the Colonel was not one to think of expense in connection with anything.

"But, Sir, I'm right sure that if you ever visited Port Hatch, there is no possible expense that would deter you from running the road there," he ventured, feeling the necessity of saying something.

"We have already visited your city," drily answered Thornton, "and have made all the necessary inquiries as to the advantages of its location."

"Then, of course, it's all decided!" the Colonel

almost shouted. "Gentlemen, I congratulate you-all on your excellence of judgment. As I have often said—"

"But we haven't finally decided," interrupted the Chairman of the Board. "In fact, we requested this interview to see what inducements Port Hatch would make us to name it our main terminal point."

The Colonel's jaw dropped, and a look of anxiety crept over his face. He straightened himself a little more erect, and settled his feet on the floor. It did not seem possible that there had ever been any doubt as to Port Hatch being the place selected. If so, Burmah had been deceived; but this was a time for caution, and so he would say nothing to cause a rupture of negotiations.

"Mister Thornton," he said, in his soft drawl, "Port Hatch means a mighty lot to me, and I reckon I mean a mighty lot to it. In fact, Sir, I think I would be enabled to talk for my town, if I knew exactly what you mean by inducements."

Thornton consulted some slips of paper on the table before him, and then, apparently not finding the one he sought, turned to Carleton.

"Charley," he asked, "have you those memoranda we made?"

Carleton looked through some slips in front of him, as did two of the other Directors, and then the missing piece of paper was passed along to the head of the table. Thornton clasped his glasses on his nose, and perused the memoranda with aggravating slowness before he turned to the Colonel, who was expectantly waiting.

"I believe Port Hatch owns its own water-works and electric light-system, doesn't it?" he asked.

"Yes, Sir, she does," proudly replied the Colonel.

"Has the city given out any street-car franchises?"

"No, Sir. It hasn't," the Colonel replied, wondering innocently what bearing that could have on the Atlantic & Oriental.

"Now about its water-front land?" calmly continued Thornton, making a note. "Does that, also, belong to the city?"

"No, Sir," replied the Colonel, eagerly, "most of that belongs to me."

"And that big flat up toward the head of the bay—is that yours, also?" Thornton went on in the same incisive categorical manner, as if checking an inventory.

"Most of that's mine, too," the Colonel hastened to answer.

"And you own considerable more land back of the city, don't you, Colonel?" Thornton pursued, although the Colonel could scarcely understand why.

"All of it," said the Colonel, with a certain buoyant inflection of pride.

"Then," interjected Carleton, "you would be the one to profit the most by the rise in land-values if the railway did come there, wouldn't you?"

The Colonel, to the astonishment of the Board, looked at the ceiling and stroked his goatee.

"Yes, Sir," he said, slowly, "I reckon I would. But, you see, that's a feature of Port Hatch that I've never thought over very much. A gentleman engaged in creating the most beautiful and model

city in the world hasn't got time, Sir, to think very much about sordid details like that."

The members of the Board looked at one another, and at him, solicitously, wondering if he were quite mentally competent. This fine old gentleman must be either insane, or else he was of an entirely new type as compared with any they had hitherto met in the course of their extended negotiations. Most of those they had interviewed thought only in dollars. They themselves, whose lives were devoted to capturing other men's money with the furious energy of hogs grubbing for roots, could not comprehend the dreamer.

"Well, Colonel Hatch," said Thornton, drily, "it seems certain that we are discussing the question with the right man. This railway will go either to Seattle or Port Hatch, and it will go where it thinks it can gain the most."

"What has Seattle offered?" demanded the Colonel, anxiously, as if about to bid against its highest mark.

"Candidly I am not at liberty to answer that," said Thornton, firmly. "But we have been in communication with its Chamber of Commerce for some months."

"Would it give you all the ground you want for switch-yards, or whatever you call them?" demanded the Colonel, rising to the occasion.

He might have been warned by the gleam in Thornton's eyes, and the pleasantly rapacious look exchanged by other members of the group of Directors, but was not, so plunged ahead.

"I'll give you, for nothing, all the land you want

for your yards up there at the head of the bay," the Colonel announced, soberly. "A pretty good offer, Gentlemen?"

He smiled round importantly, and was surprised to see that no one else appeared to regard this as a final and deciding inducement in favor of Port Hatch. Indeed, there seemed to be some inexplicable and perhaps confused undercurrent of thought running through the room, and this was made more definite when Thornton calmly took off his glasses, and hesitated as if for the idea to crystallize. He spoke at last, and when he did the Colonel was much taken back. He had expected an explicit yes.

"It seems to me, Colonel," he said, "that we might save time if I were allowed a further conference with my fellow Board-members. Would you mind waiting a few moments, in the reception-room, until —until we can get our heads together, as the saying is?"

For an instant, the Colonel was rather indignant at this request. It savored of a lack of confidence in him. It sounded almost like a dismissal; but, remembering that the ways of the great are as dark and vain as those of the fabled "Chinee", he assented, and said, "Certainly, Sir!"

He bowed with grave courtesy, and stepped out into the other room, closing the door after him. This time, as he waited, he did not stare out appreciatively at the sound, but walked restlessly to and fro in the deeply carpeted room, his hands beneath his coat-tails, and a frown of worry distorting his bushy white eyebrows. For the first time, a fear began to creep through his mind, that perhaps,

after all, the railway would select Seattle. Up to that hour he had deemed this absurdity not to be seriously considered. How any sane group of men could choose Seattle, great metropolis though it was, in preference to his beloved Port Hatch, was completely beyond his understanding. He had so often heard Burmah declaim the advantages of that beautiful little city which now seemed so far away —its proximity to the ocean, its deep and sheltered bay, its natural resources, all waiting for development. And yet those men were undoubtedly wavering, and, moreover, they did not appear so very eager to decide upon Port Hatch as their Mecca.

The Colonel suddenly suffered a chill apprehension, and was harried by a sense of desperate helplessness to cope with this situation. He felt inadequate, and wished, most fervently, that Burmah were there to assist him with sage council and a smart grasp of difficult situations. But Burmah was not there, and any delay might prove fatal to Port Hatch, so he must do the best that was in him. He straightened himself, wished that he were younger and endowed with the fighting vigor that had been his thirty years before, and waited impatiently for the door to open. He did not know that behind it, at that very moment, the Board of Directors was chuckling, or laughing quietly over the possibility of getting about everything that Port Hatch had to give, because it was palpably dealing with a business weakling.

"Seattle is too big to offer us very much," declared one man. "We'd get its share of the business, anyway, by a branch down here."

"Yes," assented Carleton, again referring to a file of letters before him, "all they offer is a right of way into the Union Passenger Station, and suggest that they can assist us in purchasing ground for yards away up on the made land."

"But Seattle is already a highly important city," objected another, "and we can't afford to ignore it!"

"We don't," retorted Thornton. "It's big enough to ignore us. We, therefore, build up a city of our own at much less cost and more profit, if we make this Port Hatch our ocean terminal."

For a full ten minutes they conferred over what they should ask, and then Carleton again stepped to the door, and invited the Colonel, who was in a nervous state bordering on the fidgets, into the room. The Colonel took the chair that was tendered, and once more Thornton adjusted his glasses, and coolly read from a slip of paper.

"Would you consider this proposition, Colonel?" he asked, suavely. "First, that we get, free of cost, such lands as we deem necessary for switch-yards of the magnitude that a great Transcontinental line would require."

The Colonel was about to say yes, but the Chairman continued before he had a chance.

"Second, that we get all the water-front necessary for docks of reasonable size for such an enterprise, also free of cost to us.

"Third, that we be given the exclusive right of franchise for all street-railways.

"Fourth, that we be given, in perpetuity, free

use of water from the city's supply, and that the city furnish, free, electric lights for our yards.

"And fifth, that the City of Port Hatch build for us a model railway station that shall cost not less than one hundred thousand dollars. I think that is all," he concluded, looking at the Colonel, whose hands had tightened themselves over the arms of his chair until the skin covering his knuckles was drawn white, like parchment.

The Colonel's spirits had descended as each demand was made. Certainly he would let them have the ground for the yards, valuable though it was, because there was lots of land left back up on the mountain side. Then the ground for the docks, the most valuable in Port Hatch, was easy to deed away, and would be gladly given. Thus far the demand could be met; but street-railway franchises —well, he wasn't so certain about that. It seemed to him that Burmah had once said they might some day be worth a great deal, and, moreover, he didn't think Hubbard would approve of a street-car line down Main Street. But he supposed that, too, would have to go, although given reluctantly under pressure. Then came the terrifying demand that a station be built to cost not less than a hundred thousand dollars! Where on earth could he get such a sum as that? He was sorry now that he had so freely spent all the thousands that had come so easily, from where only Burmah knew.

As he sat staring at a figure in the carpet, with the members of the Board watching him in greedy, expectant silence, he knew that he could promise all things, but that Burmah would have to show

him the way. And, if Burmah could not, then he, Colonel Alonzo Fairfax Hatch, would have promised something that he could not give, an impossible occurrence in his code of conduct. Without Burmah's advice and assistance, he dared not risk giving such a covenant. And, worst of all, he thought, in his ignorance, these men sitting there in the room might, in the meantime, render a decision in favor of Seattle. It was all very distressing; but he unfalteringly faced the issue.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I dare not say yes to all your proposals, although I would if I were the only one on whom everything depended; but I'm not. I've got to have time to consult with my assistant —yes, he's more than that, Gentlemen—my partner, Mister Burmah Jones."

There was some expression akin to supplication in his eyes as he spoke, some look entreating them to give him the benefit of time for seeking Burmah; but to three members of the Board his speech was like the application of a match to a fuse.

"What? What's that?" demanded Thornton, savagely.

"Jones? William Burmah Jones? He's out here, and mixed up in this Port Hatch?" shouted Carleton. And the third man lost his veneer of polish, swore steadily, and banged his fist on the table in front of him.

The Colonel, as astonished as if someone had thrown a bomb into the room, blinked his fine old eyes rapidly, and leaned forward in his chair, wondering what could have happened to disturb the serenity of the meeting, and looked anxiously from

one man to another, selecting the one that might explain this change from plain friendliness to open hostility.

"Do you happen to know, Colonel Hatch," crisply asked Thornton, "whether this man, Jones, of whom you speak was ever in Fort Scott, Kansas?"

"Why, yes, Sir! He came from there to Seattle," blandly responded the Colonel, opening his eyes a trifle wider.

"I told you that was where I last heard of him," triumphantly asserted Thornton, pointing an index finger across the corner of the table at Carleton; and the latter nodded angrily.

"Then what I want to say to you, Colonel Hatch," shouted Thornton, furiously, turning on the bewildered and hapless Colonel, and shaking a threatening hand, "is that we'll have nothing to do with your man, Jones, or anything that he has a hand in. He's a damned dirty crook! A con' man! and any man who mixes up with him, knowingly, is no better. And—"

He came to an abrupt pause, for the Colonel had lifted himself from his chair, and thrown forward fore-arm and hand, and his fingers, white and fine, were distended in a gesture.

"Stop!" he thundered, his voice redolent with command and indignation. "Stop! I say, stop!"

He paused for an instant, and Thornton, who was nearest, drew back, and half-lifted an arm as if to shield his face from an impending blow, while Carleton, thrust his chair backward, and stood up, prepared to meet physical violence. All around the table men were rising to their feet, and edging away

from this figure of indignation, which stood there quivering, tense and commanding, like a warrior who had stepped out of the past ages to the defense of the calumniated. The rustle of chairs across rugs, and of garments swayed by movement, died away into silence, and that flashing second of waiting seemed prolonged into a minute. The metallic clang of the elevator in the corridor outside came through the heavy doors with the full effect of an artillery explosion from fields over which this gallant old man had fought in the far-gone years. He seemed to tower above them, a dominant figure of wrath, with a shadowy saber in hand, as he led the charge in defense of an absent friend, regardless of the merits of his cause. His eyes were mere pieces of blazing steel, hot from the furnace, glowing so rapidly from cold scorn to fiery danger that the light seemed to play across them. He had stiffened so erect that he appeared taller, and potence was there, tensed to act as decision might declare. His jaws were shut until the muscles of his lean cheeks were harsh knots beneath the white skin. When he spoke, there was in his tone an infinite dignity, a profound contempt and fixed resolution, and each word seemed separate, and shorn of inflection.

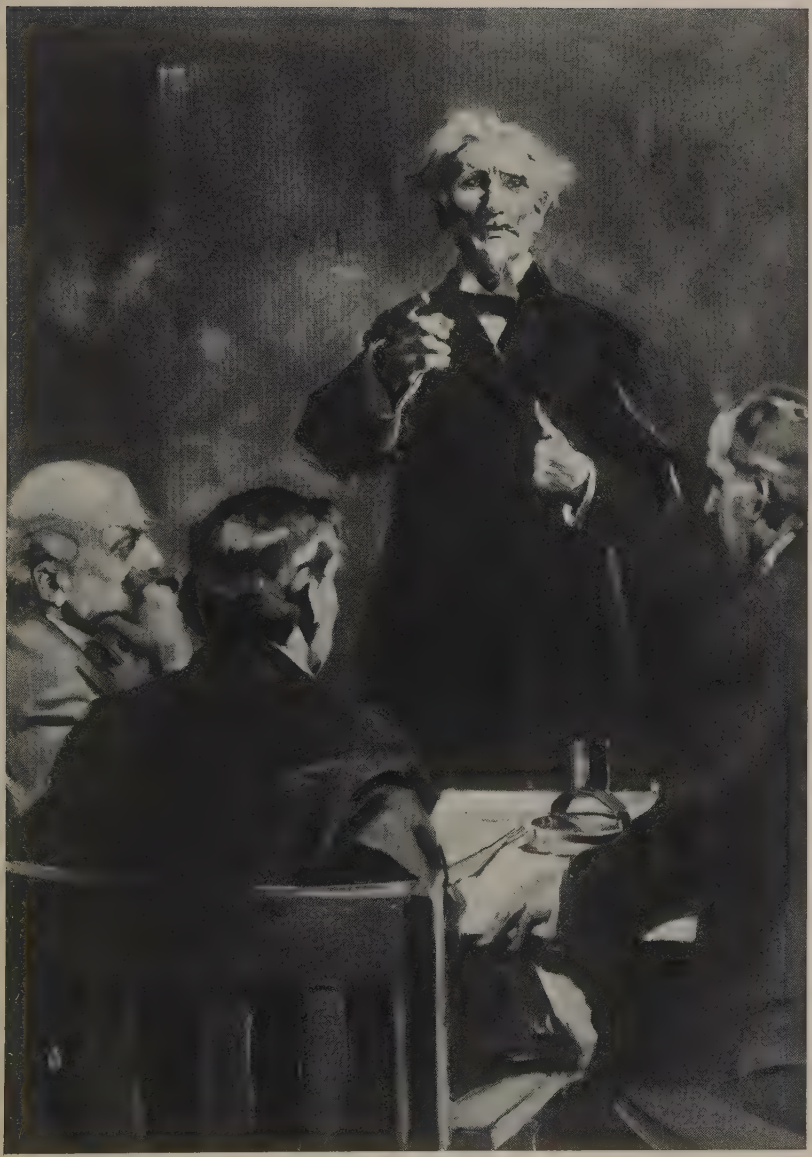
"I ain't goin' to call you 'Gentlemen,' " he drawled, in a voice that, despite its carrying quality, was scarcely above a whisper, and in words that reverted to the vernacular of Tennessee, "because you-all ain't worth that name. You're the kind that cuss a man out when he ain't around to defend himself! But I'm goin' to tell you that you're talkin' about my friend!"

He paused, and his eyes swept from one to another as if in challenge, or seeking one who dared take upon himself the gauntlet so bravely cast into the lists. There was pride in his claim upon friendship, and a desire to meet the direct traducer of it.

"I repeat it," he said in a louder and more deadly voice, firm and uncompromising, "that Mister William Burmah Jones is my friend! Now!—first, last and always! And I'll say more, that either he or I would kill the man that dared to call him the names that you-all have called him, if we were where we could have the chance to which a gentleman is entitled. There wasn't one of you that invited him here to say them to his face. You didn't send for him! You sent for me, and you-all thought I'd submit to it, didn't you? We don't do things like that in Tennessee, thank God! Maybe they do where you-all come from; so I'm glad I never was there!"

Again he waited, while Thornton's face grew redder as his anger increased. Carleton wet dry lips at such an unaccustomed arraignment of a financier, and two or three others scowled at such an excoriation. The Colonel suddenly snapped his fingers at them, and backed toward the door. One hand crept round and seized the knob, and the other clenched itself in fury, and shook itself belligerently in the air.

"Port Hatch," he roared, for the first time lifting his voice to one of unleashed anger, "needed your railway! You needed Port Hatch! But I'd rather let Port Hatch go back to a desert with wild hounds howling through her streets, and the timbers of her docks rotting away into the sound, than to do busi-



"You're the kind that cuss a man out when he ain't around to defend himself."

ness with such as you! I'd rather see her last inhabitant drop unburied on her splendid hills than to depend for his funeral on a set of scoundrels and blackguards. It may hurt her; but you and your railway can go plumb to hell!"

He opened the door and backed out into the hall; but, before they could recover from their surprise, he once more confronted them.

"Pardon me!" he said, with something of his habitual polish, so different from his recent explosion. "A moment ago, I said you could all go to hell! I'd rather you didn't. There's a bare chance I'll go there, sometime, myself, and I don't want to meet any of you. Go to some other place. Good-day!"

CHAPTER XXI.

MUCH TO THE REFORMED KNAVE'S DISTRESS.

Burmah Jones, sitting in pajamas at the window of his apartment in Port Hatch, and thinking, heard the boy who delivered the morning paper from Seattle clap down the lid of the tin mail-box, and drowsily wondered whether it was worth while to go down and learn the latest news from the outside world. Across Main Street the shutter from a window was being removed by the elder Todd as if to make sure that he would be the first to effect a sale that day. In the balcony over the way the old widow was painstakingly dripping water upon the profusion of nasturtiums in the flower-box, and from the distance came the dull swish of the street-sweeper as it cleared the smooth pavement of refuse left by night prowlers. The milkman had made his rounds and was returning, singing to the accompaniment of empty, jostled cans, and the clattering of his horses' hoofs. Burmah gave a deep sigh of contentment, and thought of his momentary weakness, of his fearful return, and of the strange fact that neither Carleton, Sprague nor Thornton had said anything at all of their knowledge of one Burmah Jones, and that the residents of Port Hatch had exhibited not the slightest change toward him. He wondered what new freak the Colonel would develop as the result of his latest trip to Seattle, for he had learned on his arrival that the Colonel had gone forth, jubilantly,

and with a strange air of mystery, on the morning that he, Burmah, had returned to "face the music." Also, on the previous evening, Arabella had told him, when he found opportunity to talk to her with the quartet, Lester and Hubbard in the background, that her father had received some news by mail that had caused him to sing exuberantly in his cracked voice, and to assure her, when he left, that the time had come when he could build a marble opera-house.

Burmah yawned again, and decided, sleepily, that he would get the morning paper, and so slipped on an "awful" dressing-gown, and descended the stairs, his bath-room slippers flapping on the bare steps with a hollow sound. He took the paper from the box, and climbed upward, and threw himself into the hammock in his balcony, after making sure that no one across the street could see him. He opened it languidly, and then, with a grunt, lost his air of luxury and sat up at the imminent risk of being tumbled out. His eyes had fallen on the "scare head" of the newspaper, which read:

"SEATTLE GETS RAILWAY"

"Board of Directors of A. & O. definitely "decide that this shall be the terminus."

"PORT HATCH IS ABANDONED."

"Magnates in conference at Hotel Jefferson conclude that claims of city down the sound are not sufficient to overcome the prestige of great commercial capital."

Rapidly he scanned the column of news, double-leaded and easy to read, in which it was stated that, after a long conference with Colonel Hatch, the

Directors, who had arrived quietly and unheralded, had finally decided that there would be no alteration in the original plans that had led the Atlantic & Oriental, true as the steel to the magnet, to Seattle; that Colonel Hatch had advanced claims for Port Hatch with his customery eloquence; but that all had been unavailing. Also, that what had taken place in the meeting had been preserved as a profound secret, and that nothing save the fact that the Colonel had been closeted with the Board during the greater part of the afternoon, and that the official announcement was sent to the newspapers by the Chairman of the Board in person, had been given out. The statement could be accepted, the readers were assured, as authoritative and irrevocable.

Over and again Burmah read this, and then turned to the inside page where the leading editorial was devoted to the aggrandizement of the winning city. In it was reflected a note of pity for those who had foolishly placed their confidence, and invested their fortunes, in the "City Beautiful," which, however worthy, could now become nothing more than an abandoned mushroom, a "busted boom town."

"In that foreshadowed and inevitable catastrophe to Port Hatch," the paper read, "one can not but find it painful to read the disappointment of that fine old gentleman, Colonel Alonzo Fairfax Hatch. Dreamer that he is, there is none so small as to believe that he was other than sincere, although perhaps over-confident. He attempted to create a city that would be peerless. He poured out his private means to that end. He preached to its citizens the high code of morality, Americanism, and

loyalty to the community, and there has never been a community established under more favorable auspices than this. It was an ideal, founded on hope. It was a city that one would like to believe a perpetuity, something that must ever grow along the lines laid out by its founder. So, in the midst of our own rejoicing that we of Seattle are to be benefited by this new and great line of communication, let us not forget to remember, with sorrow, that our success means the death-knell of a great and worthy dream."

Burmah's face was drawn and lined when he laid the paper down, and got to his feet, as if by standing erect he hoped to clear his mind, and grasp the portent of this blow. He stood there for a long time, sorrowfully drinking to the dregs the cup of disaster. A new-found cup this was, too, containing a draught that but a few months before would have been carelessly emptied into the gutter as he made his departure for other fields, jubilant over the fact that he had won another *coup*. A few months before he would have wasted scant commiseration on those who had lost through his speciousness. But, now, he looked across the street at the elder Todd, who would know, before long, that everything he had in the world, save actual cash, was valueless. The widow woman with the sprinkler, who had invested all she had in a few lots, would also have to begin life over again, burdened by gray hairs and a lean purse. There they were, all up and down the length of the street, as far as he could see while standing on the balcony, monuments of poor investments made on trust—a trust that he, Burmah Jones,

had founded, and that he, Burmah Jones, was to see fail. Every dollar he had ever made from Port Hatch would have been thrown out there on the morning breeze, could he have given it all back to them. The Colonel! And Arabella! They, too, would be among the sufferers, and yet he, Burmah, had done all he could to spare them this deplorable outcome. It was the finish, and he, astute and far-sighted, realized it better than did any other.

He wondered what could have taken place at the conference; and then his eyes fell on another top-head story in the newspaper that he had tossed on the hammock, and this time he seized it almost fiercely, held it to the light, and fairly raced through the lines of reading matter. It was the story of the arrival of the Board of Directors of the Atlantic & Oriental and an interview with its Chairman, Mr. Henry Thornton. It contained, also, interviews with some other members of the Board, including Mr. Carleton and a certain Mr. Sprague. Burmah crumpled the paper fiercely in his hand, and dashed it, a mere ball of waste, to the floor.

"They've got me!" he muttered, savagely. "They've got me! That's why the road didn't come here."

Again he fell to pacing backward and forward in the room, until, calming himself, he recovered the paper, smoothed it out on the dresser from which he ruthlessly swept the toilet articles to the floor, and painstakingly read every line devoted to the railway, seeking to discover whether any reference had been made, by anyone, at any time, to himself. There was not a line of type pertaining to him.

"Burmah, old man, this won't do," he admonished himself. "Pull together. Get back on your feet!" Walking into his bath-room, he leaped under the cold shower, rubbed himself briskly, and donned his clothing while deliberately forcing his mind to resume its normal steadiness.

"Now here's how it stands," he reasoned to himself, as if he had worked over every conclusion, and eliminated the improbable. "It must be that Thornton and Carleton and Sprague have climbed up into the railway wagon, since the time I knew them and got their money. Let me see. Um-m-h! I hooked them in about three years apart, and, at that time, I don't think they knew each other. Then they get in and come together on this Ford settlement, somehow, when old Henry Ford died, and that son of his wouldn't follow after the old man's example, but left his few hundred millions to be handled by others. They say it's all Ford money that controls the line, so that's where they landed."

Up to this point his deductions had been undeviatingly true; but now he was reaching a point where conjectures might go awry.

"They gumshoe it out West here, trying, like all railway projectors do, to tear loose whatever concessions they can from the biggest towns along the route. They have heard so much about Port Hatch through the advertising that they say to themselves, 'We'll just sneak up there, and look her over.' That's when I see some of them. I don't know they've climbed up the dollar ladder so far, and think they've come to give me away, and I bolt. They hear about me here in the town while they're

browsing around, and so send for the Colonel to come to Seattle to see them. He, poor old chap, loses his nerve. Also, he don't know how to handle them. Seattle looks better to them for the A. and O. than Port Hatch, and the Lord only knows what inducements Seattle made them. Maybe they didn't give me away to the Colonel, at all! No man who is a Director of a Transcontinental railway likes to tell any one about the gold bricks he bought. He likes to have folks think he's so all-fired smart that nobody in the world could ever bunco him out of a cent. It hurts his pride and his reputation to squeal. If I had all the money that's been paid by big bankers for worthless stuff, I'd build two or three railways before breakfast every morning for a month. Probably Carleton, Thornton and Sprague, none of 'em, said a word; but they got me, just the same, as they look at it. Maybe, if it hadn't been for me, they would have come here with the road, and the Colonel, and Arabella and everyone would have really been rich—if it hadn't been for the dirty crookedness of me! Just me!"

He groaned and shook his fists at that Burmah Jones of the past, who stood before his mental vision like a foul apparition, and his clear eyes arraigned it, line by line, as he anathematized it. He began with his childhood, and chased history through the devious years, cursing all those years because they had led him to this point, where, when he wanted to be honest and straightforward, that past held out a sinister hand, and barred him from all that was good, and condemned him to the retributive chains of his reputation. He sat for an hour des-

perately trying, from the fertility of his resources and his splendid imagination, to conceive some method of saving the situation, and in all that hour there was at no time a thought of self. He could see nothing ahead but failure for Port Hatch and all concerned. Port Hatch's doom was sealed, and, unless something could be done to mend its fallen fortunes, it would inevitably be a veritable deserted city. First of all, he must see the Colonel.

And so it was that he stood on the ornate cement dock waiting for the steamer, when she appeared around the curve of the bay and whistled her salute. Others were there, also, drawn-faced men, who talked quietly in groups, and occasionally came to him, and asked him in voices that bravely tried to suppress a tremor, whether the news conveyed in the morning papers was true. Invariably he responded, cheerfully, that he hoped not, but could not tell until the Colonel arrived. The shadow of ruin was already darkening the skies above the "City Beautiful." It seemed as if a large majority of the business men of the town were there beside him when *The Golden Eagle* threw out her gang-plank. The Colonel was almost the only passenger, and it was as if already he had come to be one of the sole residents of Port Hatch, and that traffic had reversed itself. He came down the gang-plank, looking as though he had aged ten years in a day. His face was white and set, but his eyes had the old brave look in them, the look of the man who still dreams of victory to the very end of the fight, and, dying, cheers. The anxious crowd rushed upon him, all questioning at once, and he met the issue fairly.

"Well, Gentlemen," he said, holding up his long white hand for silence, "I might as well answer you all at once. You want to know if what you saw in the Seattle morning papers is true. I'm right sorry to say it is. The Atlantic and Oriental, conducted by a pack of scoundrels, backed by the lazy son of a dead multi-millionaire, and out after whatever loot it can pick up on the trail, has at the last minute decided to cut its own throat by running to Seattle instead of to our city!"

Men stared at one another helplessly. Some swore softly. Others grumbled loudly. A dozen or so, who had not staked their all on the venture, shrugged their shoulders, and walked away. A voice at the edge of the crowd, which Burmah recognized as that of a druggist to whom the Colonel had presented a residence lot, shouted:

"Here we are! Who wants to buy some nice choice property in Port Hatch? Make me an offer! Who wants it? Name your own price. How much am I offered?"

The crowd swayed, some of its members angrily, others accepting the grim jest, and others eager to get back to their homes or shops where, in seclusion, they could think. One excited man crowded toward the Colonel, and shrieked:

"You knew it all the time! You wanted our money, you old hypocrite!"

The hurt look had not had time to cloud the Colonel's eyes before at this complainant, like stone from a catapult, sprang Burmah Jones.

"You lie!" he shouted, as he struck, and the man

went toppling backward, and would have fallen had not the crowd been too dense.

It was the Colonel who caught Burmah's arm, just as he was about to strike again, and who restrained him.

"Burmah! Burmah!" he entreated. "Don't! This ain't the time for us to lose our temper."

Burmah shook him off and crowded forward, gesticulating, and roaring at the top of his powerful voice.

"Any man that says that Colonel Hatch tried to get his money by dishonesty, is a liar! And any man that stops and thinks will know it! If anyone's to be blamed, stick it on me. I'm the man you want to talk to. Me! Burmah Jones!"

Little Billy broke through the crowd, with Pick at his heels, and Hubbard following, and together they forced the Kansan away from the dock, angrily denouncing anyone who had a harsh thought against the Colonel. They fairly dragged him, resistant, combative and furious, to the offices of the Port Hatch Land Company, where they led him to his private office, and induced him to sit down. He dropped into the depths of the leather chair from which he had made so many deals, and suddenly he subsided as if utterly spent, his head drooped on his breast, and his ruffled silk hat fell to the floor unheeded. Disheveled, with his watch-chain broken and dangling, and blood dripping from a cut on his knuckles, he gasped for breath.

"Brandy! Get some brandy! Quick!" ordered Little Billy, in an agony of apprehension; and Pick ran out of the room to return a moment later with

a flask. Little Billy, big and powerful, with the solicitude of affection and fear, put his arm behind Burmah's back, and held the flask to his purple lips. Burmah gulped the fiery draught, and sat up, at first weakly, then resolutely.

"Thanks," he said, quietly, as he pulled a handkerchief from his pocket, and tremblingly wiped the stains from his hand. He frowned at his watch-chain, and slipped the broken ends into his pocket, absent-mindedly, then reached for the hat that Hubbard had rescued from the floor. He ironed it with his coat-sleeve, and put it on his head.

"Feeling all right now, Burmah?" inquired Pick; and Burmah twisted his face into a wry semblance of a smile.

"Fit as a fiddle," he said. And then: "I guess I made a cussed a fool of myself; but, Boys, you know what I said was true! The Colonel—God bless him! —never turned a crooked card in his life. Send anyone that's got a kick to me." There was a certain grim resolution in his voice as he added: "I'll tell 'em who's to blame!"

The Colonel came hurrying into the room, and rushed to him.

"Burmah! Burmah!" he exclaimed, and his voice was filled with boundless affection.

"Colonel!" cautioned Little Billy, plucking at the Colonel's sleeve, and then, leaning over and whispering in the Colonel's ear: "Please don't bother him. He's had something almost like a stroke. He'll be all right in a little while."

But the Colonel came over and laid his arm across

the bowed shoulders of Burmah Jones, and his eyes were moist, and his voice soft, as he said:

"Don't mind it, old Friend! We'll beat them all yet! It's Port Hatch! We made it, Burmah, you and I. She goes on if everything else in the world stops. She's ours! Ingratitude's the failing of weak souls. Big ones forgive well-meant failures. I don't mind what they said to me, down there on the wharf. They don't know—they don't understand! But we do! We keep right on going!"

And every word that he uttered burned as with hot steel the man on whose shoulder his arm rested, and whose back his hand affectionately patted as if striving to comfort and encourage.

CHAPTER XXII.

AND ALL IS RUIN.

But, if it be the part of big souls to forgive ingratitude, the Colonel's soul was to be tested to the utmost, and to survive must consist of purest worth. The slump was on. It came without attempt at concealment. It was flagrant in its openness. Conover and his partners were the first to move. On the very day of the announcement that the railway would not come to Port Hatch, these intelligent dealers plastered the city with advertisements that they would auction off what remained of their subdivision to the highest bidder. Burmah, fighting like an old wolf, wounded and backed against a cliff, went to them, and protested. In vain he tried to assure them that the city was not doomed to dissolution, that it had too much of a start, that it was too well organized, and too well known to die in a day; but his tongue had lost his old eloquence, his brain its old magnetism. Too well they recognized that he was fighting a losing fight. Too well he knew that he, in their positions, would have done as they were doing, and have followed his old motto that "only a sucker stays by the sinking ship." The sale, in the following week, netted them scarcely anything, and the remaining lots were all bid in by none other than Burmah Jones. He bought at a ridiculously low price, paid for them with a shut jaw, and said he hoped the firm had profited well from Port Hatch. Carrying his attitude of complacence

still further, he invited them to the club, and cheerfully opened a bottle of wine as if celebrating the consummation of a successful deal.

It was Conover who voiced what all of Port Hatch believed.

"Jones," he said, "you are a good loser; but you know that Port Hatch is done. Owls and bats will be in its buildings within three months. We've got no kick. We did well. We've made a neat profit, and you're too wise to know that we didn't. Now, what in the name of common-sense makes you stick on here? You tried to bull the market here this afternoon, and it didn't work. There weren't a dozen bids outside of yours. In from six to eight weeks' time you couldn't give away the lots you bought this afternoon!"

Burmah vainly tried to assume an air of confidence that did not in the least deceive them. They knew, and he knew, that he was recklessly attempting to fill with gas the balloon that had burst.

The exodus began within that same week. All steamers carried away men who had found someone foolish enough to make an offer on property, and no steamer brought in a crowd of prospective purchasers as it had in the halcyon days. No man entered the offices to buy, but there were scores who came, fretfully, to sell. Port Hatch was depopulating itself in convulsive struggles, like a snake that had used its bright and glittering skin to the utmost, and was now shedding it for another. The drays went loaded but one way, and that toward the waterfront. All came back empty. They and the cabs alone profited by the exodus. Everyone seemed to

have lost faith in Port Hatch, and to have abandoned hope for its future, save the Colonel, Arabella, and the little group of faithful ones that constantly visited Marquard Villa.

And, at last, even one of these defected, the cautious Kirby, who, one night, two months after the day of the announcement of doom, said hesitatingly that he had concluded he would be compelled to seek a larger field, and had selected Seattle as the best place for his practise. He chose an opportune moment when none of the other young men from Chattanooga was present, and the Colonel, Burmah and Arabella were sitting on the terrace, each striving to comprehend the changes wrought by vicissitude.

"Going? You going, too, Kirby?" the Colonel asked, with a little catch in his voice, as if he had not expected this desertion.

"Yes, Sir," Kirby announced, without looking up. "A young man has to look out for his best interests as he sees them."

"That's true," replied the Colonel, thoughtfully; "but—say—aren't you a little premature?"

Burmah, with his face in the shadows, grinned satirically, but made no comment.

"Well, Sir, I don't think so," declared Kirby. "In fact, Colonel, I can't see why anyone insists on staying here, but perhaps those who do have reasons. It's too bad. It's the most beautiful place I know of."

"The most glorious in the world," the Colonel answered, with some of his old-time fervency; "destined, sooner or later, to be the greatest port on the Pacific Coast. The city magnificent, Sir!

The 'City Beautiful!' You are making a grave error in leaving at this crucial moment."

Kirby looked at Arabella; but she did not deign to voice a protest, beyond saying:

"We had thought you would stay, Kirby. But everyone seems anxious to go, so I don't know why you shouldn't."

"Oh, I'm not going for good," he hastened to say. "You see, I can run up for a week end now and then, so that I'll not lose track of you all."

But, to his dismay, she did not urge this point, and again Burmah indulged in a sly grin, as he stretched out his short legs, and reached for a fresh cigar. The other members of the quartet when they arrived were not so lenient. They called him a "quitter," and a "turn-coat," and heaped sarcastic remarks on his head until Arabella interfered in Kirby's behalf.

"Let him go, if he wants to," she said, stoutly. "I don't see why anyone should stay here if he thinks he can do better somewhere else."

And so, on the following day, Kirby left, after selling his lots to Tommy, who still insisted that Port Hatch couldn't lose, and to Hubbard, who invested all his savings with patient fortitude, then continued with the drawings that ceaselessly grew.

Little Billy, faithful, and Pick, determined, discussed the case with Burmah, who advised them to move slowly.

"One never can tell, Boys," he said, "what will happen; not that I don't think a heap of you for askin' me what to do. But, you see, if I told you to buy, you might think I was prejudiced. Person-

ally, although I don't want you to say anything about it, I'd hold off for six months."

But he was secretly pleased at their independence when he learned that they had sent home for money and had invested it in the somewhat foolish attempt to bull a market that refused to rise. He saw the crumbling of the city daily under his eyes, until it would have been possible to buy a lot on Main Street with a fine "High Art" building, for less than the initial cost of the land, and through it all he passed doggedly, fighting a losing battle, stepping ever backward with stiff steps. At first, he, too, had plunged and bought, hoping by this example to stave off the dissolution, then recognizing the hopelessness of such a course, had tied his purse-strings with a hard knot against the inevitable rainy day of the end, and patiently waited for the *coup de grace.* He was in a doubtful state, and speculating more on the future, when Port Hatch would finally be numbered among the deserted cities, than on the immediate passing days. He was studying the real-estate and financial news from other cities, with the brave resolution that, when he left Port Hatch, he would try to take the Colonel with him, and start all over again, surreptitiously advancing funds to the Colonel for a partnership; for he knew that by no other course could the Colonel be induced to accept anything. He did not stop to consider the change in his own mental attitude, nor could he have explained it any more than he could have accounted for the alterations in the tides that still beat, languidly, against the abandoned docks of the city. All he knew was that he had

fought it out that day in Seattle, and had determined never again to run from any issue, and never again to evade the truth. There were times, now, when he scorned himself for what he was inclined to accept as a weakness; but, despite this scorn, no thought of surrender came to him. At times, he considered, desperately, a journey to New York, to try to make peace with the Directors of the Atlantic & Oriental. It was through no fear or selfishness that he did not make the trip, because he would willingly have returned his three old-time victims all the money they had ever lost and more, had he believed such a course would cause them to relent; but he was convinced that their announcement was irrevocable, and that, in all probability, the inducements offered by Seattle were greater than any that Port Hatch could give. He had tried to learn more definitely from the Colonel exactly what had been the conversation at the Board meeting, but found him extremely reticent, or hot-tempered, whenever the subject was broached, so finally dropped it. The fat was leaving him, and baggy folds had come around his jowls, and his ring could no longer be worn. His girth decreased, but he clung to his old clothes, from force of that habit which had made him dread utter poverty in those long days between *coups* when the whole world was his to victimize, and he neither asked, nor gave, quarter.

The decline of the Colonel was more pitiable, for his blow was greater, inasmuch as he had never, for an instant, doubted the advent of the railway, and the continued prosperity of the city of which he was so insanely proud. It required time for him

to grasp the extent of the disaster, and then fell regular weekly blows that hammered and battered him beyond belief, these being occasioned by meetings of the City Council, over which he presided as Mayor, in the fine City Hall, which he had donated. Inevitably, as these meetings came, one or more members tendered their resignations, and usually the resignations were either cynical, or jocose, each word harpooning the Colonel like a bomb-lance. Invariably the resignations were accepted, and the Colonel suggested that some other member make a resolution of thanks for "the most efficient services of our esteemed fellow citizen, Mister So-and-so, as a member of the City Council of Port Hatch, who is compelled by business considerations to seek other fields."

And still further to show that he cherished no malice for all the unkindness shown, the Colonel always paid to have these resolutions engrossed and duly presented to the departing member. The Colonel also invariably made a speech to the man appointed to fill the vacancy in which he used the words:

"It is no slight honor to become a member of a body that directs the destinies of the most beautiful city in the world, one that in time shall be among the most prominent on the Pacific Coast, and which will always appreciatively remember the services of those who have been known as the city fathers."

It began to look as if Skaggs and his partner would eventually become members of the Council, merely because there would be no other men left in the town to fill the vacancies. Even Burmah and

the elder Todd had become city fathers, and received their little speeches. Herr Schmidt had burst almost beyond bounds with importance when he was appointed, and, strangely enough, used so much personal influence with his band that nearly all its members stood steadfast. Another concert-trip was being planned, which held out so much hope of income for the organization, and the band played its nightly concert in the Park stand with an audience consisting of about two score persons, including Zo-Zo, the animal-keeper. Burmah found some enjoyment from tendering bets to Hubbard on how many less auditors there would be at each concert, the grim humor of which Hubbard, ever more distressed and despondent, but persistently industrious, failed to appreciate fully.

The grass was beginning to grow long on the uncared-for lawns in front of deserted residences, and the skeletons of unfinished buildings, on which work had suddenly stopped that day of tragedy, began to show effects of the weather. Main Street lost its charm, and, but for an occasional exception, the shop windows bore signs, "For Sale. Name your own price." The Club was almost deserted, and often Pick, vainly seeking news, sat there alone, and wondered what had become of "the merry wights of yester-eve."

The end seemed very close on that sleepy, peaceful evening when Lester, still unchanged in appearance or manner, placidly strolled through the long, deserted street up the hill and out to the palace on the cliff. He seemed the only happy person in Port Hatch. He astonished the only man he saw

by whistling gaily, and this unfortunate, who had not sufficient means to depart, promptly came out, leaned over the fence, and watched him as long as he was in sight. After Lester had disappeared, he shook his head in commiseration, and decided that the young man must have gone insane. Otherwise, what in the world was there to whistle for?

Marquard Villa looked even finer than it had in the spring months, and offered a brave contrast to the other residences of the city, as if defiantly insisting that there was no possibility of decline. Its trees were heavy with foliage, its lawns like splendid carpets, its fountains splashing, and its air fragrant with the odor of carnations. Lester smiled to himself as he sauntered along the well-rolled gravel walk toward the house, and thought that it was extremely fortunate that the Colonel had this beautiful home left clear of incumbrance. Then his face sobered as it occurred to him that probably it would be but a short time before the Colonel would have to borrow money for its maintenance from some Seattle millionaire wanting a country home. Lester had no doubt that the Colonel would continue to borrow up to the very day of ejection. It was a foregone conclusion that Marquard Villa would be kept up and improved, so long as the Colonel could find a dollar for that purpose.

Lester's face was still clouded by this thought when he was ushered into the hall-way by Uncle Jeff, whose kindly old black face was exactly as it had been on the day of his arrival. If all else failed, he alone would be confident, with a child-like faith, to the day of his death, that the Colonel would sooner

or later prove to "dat cheap white trash what a gemmun could do."

Lester had become too much of a familiar in the household to require announcement, so Uncle Jeff, after greeting him, said, in a matter-of-fact way:

"Missy Arabella, Sah, am out on de terrus. De Kunnel am down to de Council meetin'. Dey ain't nobody else heah, Sah, an' Ah is shoah glad you come, bekase Ah reckons Missy Arabella right lonesome like. Right out dah, Sah!"

Lester advanced to the terrace with his usual careless, swinging stride, and his feet made no sound as he walked over the profusion of rugs in which the Colonel delighted, and to which Hubbard had always objected. He paused for an instant, admiring her as she sat looking out into the dusk that was so rapidly gathering over the western ranges, and it seemed to him that for the first time he observed a drawn look in the face, a profile that had become more clearly cut. He was almost by her side when she became aware of his presence, and looked up at him with a smile that was a trifle wan.

"You appear rather disconsolate, this evening," he said, lightly, as if to rally her, and she looked away from him toward the west.

"Yes," she answered, with her usual frankness, "I am. I'm more than that: I'm down-right blue!"

For some reason, intuitive rather than deduced, that he could not have expressed, he knew that this was not the moment for frivolities, and so made no reply as he seated himself at the other end of the curved marble seat, twisted a cushion up behind his back, and lighted a cigarette. Nor did she imme-

diately speak again, but sat frowning off into the distance for a full minute. She finally turned and faced him.

"Why don't you say something?" she asked. "I feel to-night as if I wanted someone to talk to me."

"What shall I say?" he asked, with a slight intonation of raillery. "There is nothing to talk about that I know of, except that to-day there was a notice posted on the wharf that hereafter we are to have but one regular boat per day, and that it will call at noon."

She sighed softly, as if this had been an expected, but dreaded, event.

"Does Father know it?" she asked.

"I don't think so."

She waited a moment before speaking, and then said, in a voice of distress:

"Oh, I am so sorry! Father will—well—you can't imagine how it hurts him—every time something of this kind happens."

"I do imagine," he responded, quietly. "One must be blind not to discover that."

"He has failed, dreadfully, hasn't he?" she asked, in a tone betraying her anxiety.

Quite slowly, as if with reluctance, he agreed; and again, for a few minutes, they sat without speech, each engrossed with thought. There was something almost of despair in her voice when she again turned to him, and shifted in her seat as if wearied of looking out over the unchanging western mountains that stood, inflexible and unfeeling, against the sky-line, heedless of the misfortunes of those who dwelt within their view.

"Tell me," she said, as if longing for some word of encouragement, "what is to be the end of all this? I can talk to you more freely than to anyone else, save Uncle Burmah, and of late he has become so quiet, so—what shall I say?—so changed, that I can get him to say nothing."

Lester smiled, with a show of scorn that he would have concealed, had not the shadows been so heavy as to render it obscure.

"I don't suppose he feels like saying much of anything," he answered. "Why should he? He is the only one I know of in Port Hatch that made and kept his money."

"That is unkind of you!" she declared with hasty firmness. "You have no right to say that. I don't like it. It doesn't seem quite worthy of you, because you can see, for yourself, that he is doing the best he can, and that he, too, has suffered. He shows it. At least, he hasn't deserted us, as nearly the whole town has done."

Lester fought a desire to express his opinion of Burmah, and then suddenly sat up and leaned aginst the stone railing. The girl by his side had stated a truth, for Burmah was still there. It certainly did not seem that he had proven so mercenary as Lester had suspected. Why had he stood steadfast, when it would have been better for his own interest had he gone with the others? He found himself puzzling over this, and at last relieved himself by saying:

"I beg pardon! I shouldn't have said anything about him."

"I knew you would admit it," Arabella replied.

"It isn't like you to say mean things. Do you know, that's one reason why I admire you! You have been here ever since we have, and you are always the same—only, do you know, I believe I would like you more if you weren't so dreadfully aloof."

He was aware that she was studying him, and he grew restless under her look, and tried to shift the topic.

"You want to know what I think will be the end of things?" he said. "Well, I'll tell you. The end will be that there will be nothing here on this point but the villa. There is nothing to make a city here, for many years, now, save a railway. It could be a great city with that, and it would have been beautiful; but it was only a dream on the Colonel's part, and a—well—let us say—a hope, on the part of Burmah Jones."

He could tell by her attitude that she was despondent over his prediction, and guessed that she had been hoping that he would say something encouraging, when there was no encouragement to be given in truth. He thought it best to make it plain to her; if she still had any lingering illusion, it should be cleared away.

"Listen," he said, in a gentle voice, and bending toward her so that he could see her face more clearly as she sat there in the dusk. "Sometimes it's kinder to be cruel. There's not a chance in the world for Port Hatch without a railway. The railway management has announced that it will go to Seattle, and that seems final. The Colonel is but wasting his time, and what small money he has left,

by remaining here. He should close Marquard, and go before his last money is gone."

"Money!" she responded as he paused. "Money! Why, do you know that I don't believe he has had a dollar left for the past month? Do you know that I suspect, although I can't find out, that his bank-balance has been frequently renewed by Uncle Burmah?"

He started, almost obstinately, as if loath to grant such a fantastic surmise any credence whatever. He was still reluctant to believe that the man whom he had conceived to be nothing but a cold-blooded swindler had shown such a liberality.

"Why do you think that?" he demanded.

"Because," she answered, "twice Father has been surprised to get his bank-book, and find balances that he did not know existed. Each time he wrote the bank, and each time they replied that all the information they had to give was that certain drafts had been received, and deposited to Father's credit. I asked Uncle Burmah, and he merely grunted in the way he has when he doesn't want to say anything. It looks mighty peculiar to me!"

Lester did not immediately reply.

"Don't you think it does?" she insisted, as if seeking his opinion to fortify her own.

"Yes, it is—unusual," he admitted, thoughtfully. "But that is all the more reason why you should try to influence the Colonel to leave here before he is too hopelessly involved."

"I know it," she answered, wearily. "But did you ever know anyone to influence him in anything

where his mind and heart were set, as they are on Port Hatch? It can't be done!"

"Wouldn't he go if—if you were to leave?"

"Leave? If I were to leave?"

She half-arose from her seat, as if confused by mingled surprise and indignation.

"Why, what on earth are you talking about? Leave my father? I would no more think of leaving him, even as a pretext to get him to go, than I would think of murdering him in his sleep!"

She was not in the least aware that he was strangely disturbed by her answer, and that he had awaited her words with a sudden hungry flame in his eyes. He bent his broad young shoulders a trifle, and restrained a tremor in his voice as he asked:

"But, if it were for your happiness, would you not go?"

"No," she replied without hesitation; "I would not."

"But suppose, also, that it was for his good?" he questioned, eagerly.

She turned her face toward him, and met his look squarely and with candor.

"There is a great deal of difference between what is for his good, and what is for his happiness. I don't shut my eyes to the truth, you see; but I know, better than anyone in the world does, that his happiness, his everything, is here—bound up in all this that you see—out there!"—she waved her hand toward the distant mountains illumined by the rising moon—"and in Port Hatch. It means more to him than all else in the world—save

his friends and me. You see, it was more than success, because he loved it. It was more than triumph, because it proved his assertion—you know what he used to say so often, about a gentleman being able to make money if he wanted to. Its failure means his humiliation. He wrote so often about it to his old friends back home! He gloried in it! It was named after him. He was the first Mayor! He felt that he had created it. You don't know, but I do, that he is dying by inches —and dying, too, of a broken heart."

She paused, and her white fingers twisted themselves together as if her distress were bringing her to the verge of a break-down. Lester fought an impulse to seize them and to comfort her; but did not dare.

"Oh, you don't any of you understand, unless it's Uncle Burmah—God bless him! You don't know how my father walks backward and forward on the terrace out here in the night, and over the lawn, when he thinks I am asleep! Nor of how I have heard him muttering in his dreams, and have tiptoed to his door, and listened to all the grief that is just fairly killing him! Don't you see that it isn't Port Hatch alone that's dying? It's my father who is dying with it! When Port Hatch dies, so will he! It's sure—it's positive!"

She started to her feet, then whirled, and all her brave restraint was gone—all her fight to preserve a cheerful front to the disaster that was overwhelming her. She abruptly dropped back to the cushions, threw her arms across the balustrade above the edge of the cliff, buried her face in them,

and burst into tears. Lester, the apparently cold and phlegmatic, had strained forward, tensed in every fiber, and shutting his jaws as if to repress a cry as she talked, and his hands had gripped the edge of the marble on which he sat as if to check himself from making some serious mistake that might forever cut him off from her life. But now, overcome, he leaped to his feet, and across the intervening space in the curve of the niche, and threw himself on his knees beside her.

"Arabella! Arabella!" he exclaimed. "This can't go on! It mustn't! It isn't the Colonel, nor you alone, that is being crucified, but I as well. I can't stand it to see you suffer. I won't! I love you, Arabella. I love you too much for that. Oh—I—" He seized her arms, almost roughly, and lifted them from the stone. He gathered them and her head into his embrace, and stroked her hair as she sobbed on his shoulder. He lifted himself to his feet, carrying her with him, until they stood together; she unresisting, and he holding her close as he might have held a wounded child, tenderly, and with a passionate desire to comfort. He could not speak, although his thoughts leaped to a torrent of words, for his throat was restricted, his lips dry, and his heart pounding wildly with a great elation and love. He could only bend over and kiss her hair, sense rather than smell its intoxicating fragrance that enveloped his face like a perfume, and hold her with a reverence profound and overpowering. All that he had wanted to tell her, for many months, at last surged into words that he whispered into her ears while she, as if tired of the struggle and

her well-kept sorrows, rested quietly, save for the timid, yet yearning, up-lift of her arms, which crept around his neck, and clung to him as if to some wondrous shield of refuge and comfort.

She drew away from him, after a time, and now her hands held his face, and she studied it, and his eyes, with a pathetic air of inquiry. The moon had crept above the trees, benignant, wise and tolerant. It beautified with soft shadows the stately villa on the cliff. It made of the terrace, perched high above the glittering sound, a balcony of love. It rendered the ivy that she had nurtured until it climbed upward along the façade, a marvelous lace-work imbedded in mystic light. It enhanced the tender warmth and timidity of her eyes; it emphasized the wholesomeness of his face as he met her inspection. They were suddenly incapable of speech. They had passed beyond the possibility of words to that marvelous place where souls are bare, and must show clean to brave the test.

It was almost in a tone of wonder at the miracle that she spoke, when at last she found voice.

"I know nothing of you," she said, barely above a whisper, "save that I love you. You have told me nothing of yourself, yet I trust you. I desire nothing but you. I have known you only since I came here, and yet I feel that I have known you always. You have said no word of love to me, until to-night, and yet I have known, as if always, that you loved me, and that you are strong."

And he, thrilled to ecstasy, too overcome to reply, could but draw her more closely to him, and pillow her head on his breast.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE KNAVE SACRIFICES HIS ALL.

It was nearly midnight when Burmah Jones led the way to the door of the Club, with the Colonel lagging a step or two in the rear, took out his key, opened the door, and stepped in. He paused to look backward along the moon-flooded street that was as quiet as if Death had taken all the inhabitants of Port Hatch, and wafted them away, forever, to some new land. There was but one light visible, and Burmah, with a twinge of conscience, identified it as the one that shone from above the hardware store where the elder Todd had his abode, and was at that moment doubtless walking the floor, and suffering torments of distress and apprehension. The widow's place was dark, and the vines that trailed from the flower-boxes over her balcony appeared polished and motionless. From the distance came the heavy, restless "woof" of one of the lions in the Zoölogical Gardens, as it longed for freedom and night wandering beneath the moon. In a subdued monotone could be heard the sullen lash of the waves against the wharves, beaches and cliffs of Port Hatch. Gone were the voices of those who laughed, or sang, when the night was scarcely old, and gone were the sounds of music bursting carelessly from some residence where a jovial party had gathered for the evening. Port Hatch was like a tomb.

"Come on up, Colonel," Burmah said, as he threw the switch inside the doorway, and flooded the stairs with light. "It's come to a place where me and you've got to have a talk."

The Colonel, after consulting his watch, meekly followed, and they entered the club-rooms that Hubbard had decorated with such interest, and where, but a few months before, there would have been at this hour a convivial, prosperous crowd of men. The steward, last remaining unit of a little force that had dwindled away to the four corners of the world, aroused himself sleepily, and came forward to do their bidding. Burmah observed that the man looked tired, and commented on the fact.

"I am Mister Jones," the steward said. "What with being the only servant in the Club, Sir, and doing all the janitor work, as well as what little else there is to do, it gets monotonous."

"Well, suppose you get us something to drink, something long and cool, and then go to bed," Burmah suggested. "I'll turn out the lights when we go."

"Thank you, Sir," said the steward, taking the order and slipping noiselessly away to fill it.

Burmah and the Colonel settled into the commodious chairs, which had been provided by the latter in the days of his affluence, and waited, each absorbed in thought. The Colonel drummed absently on the table beside his chair, and Burmah leaned far back, and stared at the dark beams above him, at the paneled walls, and the massive, wrought-iron lamp that swung from the ceiling by heavy chains, Lester's contribution to the room. He said nothing

until after the steward had bade them good-night, and then looked keenly at the Colonel to discover his mood, and spoke:

"Colonel," he said, "does it strike you that we haven't sold a single lot since the day we knew that Seattle was to get the road?"

"I didn't know it; but I reckon that must be about so," the Colonel reluctantly admitted.

"And I guess you must also have figured that we ain't goin' to sell any more, haven't you?" Burmah asked.

The Colonel roused himself, and scowled at the glass he held in his hand.

"Maybe we won't, now;" he said, "but they'll sell some time, sure! It's got to come! Port Hatch has got to be a city. Nothing can stop her."

Burmah tolerantly flipped an ash toward a tray, and prepared himself for an argument. His native tact and diplomacy were summoning themselves to his desire.

"Quite right," he said, softly; "but, in the meantime, it strikes me we ought to get away from here, and keep busy somewhere else."

The Colonel did not answer. Burmah surmised that perhaps his listener was fearful lest he, also, was going to desert.

"Not that I'll go if you won't," he said, to assuage any fear the Colonel might have; "but that, if you'll go, I think we ought to. I'll take care of them that's stuck here, so that they'll have a chance to come out even, or ahead. You can leave Uncle Jeff and his woman to look after the villa,

and you and me'll go somewhere, and make some money."

"Make money?" the Colonel repeated. "A gentleman can make money anywhere, Sir, if he makes such a pursuit his ambition. But leave Port Hatch? Why, say, Burmah!"

He leaned across the table, and fixed his eyes on his companion, and raised his voice to an emphatic protest.

"I'd not leave Port Hatch to make a million somewhere else! I'll not leave it, if I'm the last man left here, and have to tend my own truck patch to get turnips to eat! If no one else in the world believes in her, and loves her, I do, and I'm going to keep on. Why, Burmah, this town's named after me. The very name stands for sticking right through to the finish. Hatch! Port Hatch! And dog-gone me, Sir—you don't think I'd desert her just because a lot of short-sighted, pusillanimous, yellow-souled folks ran away at the sound of the first gun, do you?"

With declamatory hands, intent brows and vibrant voice, he went on with a tirade that lasted for a full five minutes, betraying his irritation, as well as the undercurrent of desperation that filled his being, day and night; and Burmah waited until, exhausted, the Colonel stopped to drink.

"But, Colonel, I'm not askin' you to abandon Port Hatch," he said, mildly. "All I'm askin' of you is that we go to some place while there's a little money to be had, and make some more money, to take care of her until she comes back into her own again. I've got some money left."

The Colonel abruptly slipped his trembling hand over, and laid it on Burmah's arm. His voice was husky with feeling when he spoke.

"Burmah," he said, determinedly, "you know that I haven't got to a point where I'd accept a dollar for nothing from a friend. You are a friend! I thank you, Sir, for your offer; but I couldn't, and wouldn't, do that. And I couldn't leave here. I think I'd die if I did. I'd think of her, back here on the hill, alone, with the grass crawlin' in like a slow thief in the night, to blanket her pavements like a grave. I'd remember the flowers wiltin' away around what had been homes, and turnin' their faces up to the sky. Why, Burmah, every one of them, every bird that makes its nest in our trees, would talk to one another, and say, 'Hatch? Where's Colonel Hatch? Why don't he come back?' No, Sir, I can't go!"

There was almost a wail in the Colonel's voice as he closed, and Burmah saw that the man had broken more, even, that he had appreciated. Swift to change his arguments, he took a new tack.

"Well, Colonel, you know that I'm a mighty poor business man, unless I have you to advise me. S'pose I go away from here, and find some new business, and write you for advice when I need it, and send you your share of the money? How about that?"

The Colonel shook his head, and smiled sadly.

"I couldn't do that," he declared, "much as I'd like to; because I'm too plagued busy here. I wish for your sake, too, that I could, because, of course, I admit, with due modesty, that I have made a

great study of high finance. But you could do the same! Any gentleman, if he but—"

"Oh, I know all that, Colonel," interrupted Burmah, "but you owe me a start in life, you know. I can't do nothin' without havin' you around. Now, don't say no to me again until you've had time to think it over. I'm in no hurry. Say next week. How'll that do? Then me and you could go somewhere, and get into some other deal, and make a wad, and—why, Lord, Colonel!—maybe we'd get enough to come back here and start old Port Hatch ahead again just like wildfire in a prairies grass!"

The Colonel wavered for an instant, and seemed again on the verge of refusing; but Burmah prevented him from doing so. In his own mind, he had the idea of enlisting all the pressure that could be brought to bear by Arabella, Little Billy, Hubbard, Tommy and Pick, to gain his purpose, wildly philanthropic as it was. Lest the Colonel make his decision irrevocable, he shifted the conversation to marble opera-houses and new animals, and a dozen other trivial topics, then almost shoved the Colonel out of the door, and bade him good-night. He watched him out of sight, after which, with a hopeless shake of his head, he returned upstairs to the Club to think, as he had thought thousands of times in the preceding months, if there were not some way out of the whole disaster by which he could compel the Colonel to make a little profit.

The club-rooms were so still that the silence would have been oppressive to one of weak nerves; but he was unmindful. He walked to the sideboard, and made another drink for himself, fumbled

around until he found a cigar that suited him, punctiliously signed a tag, and returned to his seat. The glass was poised in his hand, when he heard a noise below, the sharp grating of a key, the opening of the hall-door, and steps bounding up the stairs. He turned with a smile on his face, expecting to see Little Billy, or Pick, and then the smile died away, and gave place to a cold, indifferent look: for Lester, grave, intent and staring, stood in the arched way.

"Well, Mister Jones," he said, scarcely concealing the sneer in his voice, "you seem to have the Club to yourself. Strike you as rather lonely?"

"Not until you came," affably retorted Burmah. "But I suppose bad company's better than none, after all."

"Thanks!" grinned Lester, amused in spite of himself. "I understand, from that, you're glad I'm here."

"Not at all," replied Burmah, lighting his cigar, and apparently at his ease. "I'm only glad that you didn't come sooner; because I'm just about ready to go home."

Lester smiled sardonically, and deliberately took the seat the Colonel had vacated, while Burmah sat as motionless as an image, striving to appear unaware of Lester's presence.

"I'd rather you didn't go until I've had a talk with you," Lester said, lighting a cigar for himself, and talking between puffs.

"Fire away then," invited Burmah, still motionless.

"I suppose," said Lester, with the same sarcastic

affability, "that I'm the only man in Port Hatch that was next to you."

"I rather think that's true," replied Burmah, entirely without heat.

"And I rather think, also, that you're the only man that had anything to do with Port Hatch, who saved anything out of it."

"Right ag[illegible]n!" declared Burmah. He turned his head until he faced Lester, and looked at him with his keen eyes. "Do you know, Lester," he said, "that I sort of like you because you're so devilish smart and impertinent! Not that I want to, or that I don't want to, but just because I do."

Their eyes fought a duel for a full quarter-minute, but neither gave in.

"You think I'm a crook, and a swindler, don't you, Lester?" Burmah asked.

"Yes," fearlessly replied the younger man; "I do."

Burmah did not appear in the least disturbed; rather, he seemed suddenly thoughtful, and as an evidence began chewing his cigar in the old vigorous way.

"I sort of like you for that, too—for bein' unafraid to say what you think," he said, as if to himself; and, for some reason that he could not in the least define, Lester, strong, and self-confident as he was, felt that he had come unexpectedly into contact with a most masterful man, who might after all prove his superior. The knowledge was disturbing. The egotism of youth accepts mental buffets reluctantly. He was more than ever convinced that he had underestimated the adventurer, when Bur-

mah suddenly whirled in his chair, threw his cigar into the tray, faced him with eyes that were steely in their clarity, and spoke.

"I also want to say that you're damned impudent, and young, and that I'm goin' to talk to you about somethin' that you may remember, sometime, and that'll make you a little more charitable. The heads of some men could be improved by pullin' and stretchin', or shapin' them. What yours needs is broadenin'. It's too narrow. Sit down! Don't get excited! I wouldn't talk if I wanted to fight. I've shot men for less than you've said to me. There's no reason why I should talk to you, Lester, except that I like you, after a fashion."

Lester, who had started to his feet with an angry scowl, dropped back into the chair, and glared at Burmah, wondering what else of a humiliating nature this strange fat man would have to say; and Burmah, quietly relaxing, put the tips of his fat fingers together, and talked as if to the lamp suspended above, the soft rays of which fell downward over his sparsely coated, gray head. It was then that Lester, as if recovering from blindness, discovered something in its shape, a suggestion of terrific power, a definite air of prodigious strength, which he had not hitherto observed.

"My father," said Burmah, "was a turfer. I don't guess you know what that is. It's a man who took up land forty or fifty years ago in the West, and was so devilish poor that he had to make a hole in the ground, and cover it with turf, like the animals do, to keep himself sheltered from blizzards and rain. I was born in the bottom of the wagon that

he drove to Kansas from southern Illinois. My mother died when I was eight years old, and all the education I ever had was what she taught me, as best she could, there in that sod-house. Pop and I buried her out back, and it was winter, and I cried because I was afraid she'd be cold out there under the snow."

He stopped for a moment, but his voice was as level as ever without emotion when he continued.

"There was a fight over the survey and my father and four others tried to keep their land, even when a Sheriff's posse of fifty men tried to put 'em off. There was a lot of shootin'. The rifles banged in our turf-house till it was full of smoke, and Pop told me to lie down on the floor where the air was better. By-and-bye, one, then three others, were layin' there beside me! but they weren't there for air. They had no more need for it. I think Pop was the last on his feet, loadin', aimin', and firin'. Just that, except when he missed, and swore because the ammunition was runnin' out. Then, all of a sudden, my father reeled around the room a minute with his hands held out, and then came to his hands and knees, and, when I screamed to him, crawled quite slowly over till he got his arms around me. After a while they found us that way; but Pop was dead, and I was cryin' a little, and huggin' him, and talkin' to him, and beggin' him to answer—for I loved him. He didn't though. When the Sheriff opened the door, I asked him to help me. And the Sheriff stood there, and the doorway was filled with heads. I could see because the smoke had cleared some, and the Sheriff said, 'Well, I'll be damned!'

That was all. They had the land—that is, all except six pieces of it, about three by seven each, that my mother, my father, and the four others held, and still hold."

Lester, who had gradually leaned forward, breathless, gave a subdued exclamation; but Burmah did not heed it.

"I was sent to a poor-house. The superintendent was a brute. I always promised that, when I grew up, I'd kill him; but I didn't. He beat me to it by dyin'. Pneumonia, it was, and he croaked. The supervisors bound me out to a rancher, and he hammered it into me that there was nothin' in the world worth while but money; that no human bein' was worth more than could be got out of his hide; that a man who had any sympathy for anything, or looked for anything, but the almighty dollar, was a sucker. So he helped educate me that way, not in books, until I got big enough to run away."

He chuckled a little as if at some recollection, and, still without looking at Lester, proceeded.

"I couldn't do it now, but I got to be a pretty fair horse-wrangler, and I was quick with my hands, and wasn't afraid; so, after a while, the cook of our outfit took an interest in me, and taught me how to work the three cards and the shells, just for the fun of it. When I got paid off, and had learned to drink two men's share of rotten booze, and went broke, I remembered what the cook had taught me, and it seemed a heap easier than climbin' on top of a thousand pound of livin', fightin', strikin', bitin', buckin' broncho. I didn't have anything in the way of morals, or conscience, or fear. A bad

combination, Mister Lester! Bad! There was no friend to tell me any better. The only ones I had were the saloon- and gamblin'-house-keepers. The only enemies I had were the jailers, and some of them weren't so rotten, either. But after a while I drifted East, and saw that there were bigger games, and I got into 'em. Then I found out, and was surprised, that there was ways of gettin' the money without goin' to jail, and I didn't like jails, nohow. I had a dangerous gift. I don't quite know what it was; but I could talk to a man, and tell him I was goin' to skin him, and laugh in his face, and get his money. Lots of 'em liked me. I've made honest money, and I got so I liked honest money better. But I didn't stop, when luck played against me, to make the other kind. And I studied a lot, too, tryin' to get so I could talk to the big fish without exposin' my ignorance. I've made some big deals that were fair, and some—just some—that wasn't."

He turned again, and pulled his chair around until he faced Lester, and now he emphasized his words with one hand striking the other, and from the shadow cast by the lamp's base, and the black wainscoated walls, against which background his head appeared firm and strong, his eyes seemed to shine with the intensity of his mind.

"Lester, there were ten years of my life when, if any man had come to me, and been half-way decent, and encouraged me to do the right thing only, I'd have done it, and gone to hell for him if I had to! It's true, so help me God! You came in here, and sneered at an old, gray-headed, tired crook; but you never put your hand on his shoulder, and said,

'Old chap! It ain't the right road to travel. I'll help you along another.' Not you, because you're young, and ignorant, and don't see the other side. You condemn 'em for their acts, and don't try to help 'em for their future. Why, Boy, for that's all you are—they're all around you—men who never had a chance! men who don't know! men who like to do the right thing, but can't find the way! You've sneered at me. It ain't your fault, but I'm better than you, a whole lot! Because I've helped some of the wrong ones to turn right! I've made money, lots of it, and 'most always I've given it away, crook that I am, no preacher, no missionary, no humanitarian—just a man who was strugglin' along in the only way he knew, crooked if need be and without conscience, but honest if it didn't cost the game. Crook that I was, I'm better than you, who probably was never tried out, and probably never will be, because I've helped a few of 'em when help was needed."

Strangely enough, Lester had a feeling that he had been petty and mean, and was now confronted with the truth. He fought against, and yielded to, an unaccountable admiration assailing his mind for this man whose past was, confessedly, devious.

Burmah sighed, arose, walked out to the bar, brought back another long glass of some light drink, and readjusted his chair.

"Well?" questioned Lester, as if there had been but a slight pause in the conversation.

"Well, what?" asked Burmah without looking at him.

"What else?"

"Nothin', only this: You're young; I'm old. I've

told you all this so that you'll stop and think, whether you want to or not, before you condemn a man without givin' him a chance. I've told it to you so's you'll think it over, and see if it isn't a heap better to have an ounce of charity than a pound of self-righteousness." He got up from his seat, and stood in front of Lester, and shook his finger at him.

"Look here! You don't like me! You were smart enough to size me up! But I liked you just the same, and do like you, and am goin' to tell you somethin'. I started in on this game of Port Hatch to get what I could and get away. I got to know the Colonel, and his daughter, and the boys from Chattanooga, and Hubbard; and I was hungry —yes, Sir—hungry to have them keep on likin' me. They all did. They believed in me! They trusted me! Old Todd did, too. And I'll swear to you that I've never taken a crooked cent from any of 'em since the town started, and that, if I could do it, I'd give 'em every dollar I've got! I'd give all I've got, and half the rest of my life chucked into the pot, if I could undo all I've ever done, and be just what they are, folks with clean lives behind 'em. Folks that ain't ashamed of anything they've ever done! All my life I've played for a pot of gold, and won to find it counterfeit. The real gold in life, the kind that's not coined in mints, the gold of self-respect, I let slip by, and now, when it's late —so late—I know! That's where I stand!"

He banged his clenched fist on the table, and stared defiance at Lester, as if challenging him to doubt the assertion. And Lester, looking at him, believed

it. A strange and dazzling temptation came to him, overpowered him, and made him stand up before Burmah, and look squarely down into the little giant's eyes.

"How far," he almost whispered, " how far would you go to prove this?"

"To the limit!" came the explosive response.

"What would you do if I came to you and said: 'Mr. Jones, I'll show you that the Atlantic and Oriental Railway will come to Port Hatch?' What would you do, I say?"

For a long time, Burmah looked up at him, and then said, with a hoarse earnestness:

"You make me believe that, and I'll take every dollar I've got in the banks, and buy back Port Hatch land on a busted market, and buy it back in the names of Colonel Hatch and his daughter! You make me believe that, and I'll make them, and Todd, and every one of the boys, and all who have stuck here by the game, rich!—rich, I tell you!"

"But what of you, Burmah Jones?" Lester asked, in that same enthralled, curious whisper, which echoed hollowly around the empty club-room in which they stood.

Burmah turned from him with a short, harsh laugh. He walked slowly to the other side of the table, then faced Lester with both hands outspread, palms upward, as if already he had emptied and cleansed them of pelf.

"What does that matter?" he asked. "What am I? Nothing! I can go ahead on the plan I laid out for myself just about three months ago. What that is, don't matter to you. There are all sorts

of things a man like me can do. I can go back to New York, and peddle gold bricks if I have to, until the prison furnishes me a home. I can go away, anyhow, if Port Hatch can make good, knowin' that back out here in this corner of the world is one little set of people—good people—honest ones, who believe in me, and love me, and would grieve if they heard that I had gone! That alone, Lester, would make me richer than I've ever been! By God, it would!"

Lester came to the table, and leaned over on his knuckles, and bent his head beneath the old wrought-iron lamp, and thrust his jaw forward, and looked the emphatic, Napoleonic little fat man straight in the eyes.

"Do you know why the railway didn't come here?" he asked, cutting his words off with distinct precision.

Burmah's eyes opened wider, as if with long-spent curiosity, and he said:

"No. Do you? If you do, tell me."

"Because on that Board of Directors were three men that you had practically swindled out of thousands of dollars, years ago! Because when the poor old Colonel, harassed by their demands, said he wanted to consult you, and mentioned your name, they swore they would have nothing to do with you, or anything with which you were concerned. And he, brave, loyal, lovable old man that he is, turned down their proposition, defied them, cursed them, knowing when he did it that he was breaking himself—yes, breaking himself and the town—in your defense!"

Burmah lifted trembling hands before him, as if to shield himself from the lash of Lester's words, and staggered back, slowly, step by step, his feet dragging over the carpet, until he struck a chair. It toppled, wavered, and with a crash fell on the hard, polished floor beyond the edge of the rug. For an instant he paused, then reeled back against the wall as if for support. His legs appeared to tremble beneath him, and he threw a hand up and clung to the plate rail to support himself, gasped, reached up, and caught his collar with the other hand, and with a mighty wrench tore it open, cravat and all, from his throat. The purple died from his face to be succeeded by a ghastly pallor, and he suddenly lunged forward, with both hands shaking in front of him, as if appealing to Lester for some word of mercy.

"Lester—Lester—" he stammered in a harsh, dry whisper—"are you sure? How do you know? Don't pile it on! The Colonel—the Colonel was whipped through me? Tell me it isn't true, Boy! Tell me you're only bluffin' me—that I'm not the one to blame!"

He came to the edge of the table, and bent forward to study his companion's face for what seemed a long, long time. And at last, as if he had read the truth, he fell weakly back into a chair. Lester pitied him then, and, after one instant's hesitation, rushed to his side, and bent over him. He caught the glass from the table, and held it toward him; but Burmah brushed it away. He regretted that he had told Burmah what he had learned, for he had not realized that this strange, immobile ad-

venturer was a man living behind a masque; that back of his habitual calmness was a tempestuous spirit and that, crook as he had been, he had poured out idolatry at the shrine of the Colonel and those he loved. He had not understood that this wandering cynic had come to regard those faithful ones as children whom he was bound to protect, and that his one source of comfort had been that he was not responsible for the final blow, which spelt ruin for them all.

Slowly Burmah recovered, and sat with brooding eyes, as Lester, giving him time, walked backward and forward in the room. Then the younger man paused in front of the older, and put a hand on his shoulder.

"Listen," he said. "I think I know a way by which it can be done. I think I know an influence that may yet bring that road here—to Port Hatch. You said you'd buy the land and buildings back, if you thought that were so, and put them in their names. How much money have you got?"

Burmah was active again, the old fire in his eyes, the old grip of himself returning. He gathered his forces as if for his last battle, pitifully fighting to clarify his brain, and, when he lifted his head, he quite steadily answered:

"Almost three hundred thousand dollars, all in cash, all available."

He got to his feet, seemed to further steady himself, and without a single note of excitement in his voice said:

"You show me where there's a chance, a gambling chance, and I'll put in every dollar of it!"

"I can show you the chance," asserted Lester, overawed by the man's nerve and fidelity, and compelled to pay him respect. "I can convince you there is a chance."

"Then," said Burmah, the calculating business man, the general of finance once more, "we'll have to move fast. You don't trust me; but I do you. I can't do it alone, because it would take too much time and attract attention, so you've got to take one hundred thousand of that money, and go out and buy. Buy in the name of the Colonel. Buy everything that can be had. We must buy the town back! Buy it back for them. I want to do something for Todd and Schmidt—and for the old widow who runs the store. And for Hubbard, and the boys. Leave that to me."

He stepped vigorously before Lester, and spoke in his old, imperious voice.

"Now, it's up to you—up to you, I say, to show me how you think it can be done!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

BEFORE SAYING FAREWELL.

It was the candid opinion of Little Billy that everyone in Port Hatch had gone a little mad, and in a grumbling, rumbling voice, he expressed his conclusions to Pick, who sat on the end of a paste-daubed table, and grinned.

"In the first place, I found out to-day that Arabella has got herself engaged to Lester. She accepts him, and will doubtless marry him, because she does whatever she makes up her mind to do, and turns down all the rest of us that went to school with her, and pulled her pigtail at parties, and fought for her. Who is he? I don't know; you don't know; she doesn't know. He tells her not to worry about his ability to support her in a modest way, although he is afraid he'll have to go to work to patch out his allowance. That shows that he's mad, because he's never been out of Port Hatch since we came here, and the hardest work any of us know of his doing is to bait his own fish-hooks, and mix his own drinks. So Arabella's mad, or she wouldn't have accepted him. There's another proof that Lester's gone dippy, because the first thing he does after getting himself engaged is to announce that he expects to leave, within a few days, for a month's absence. The Colonel's mad because he suspects that Burmah wants to quit him, and all the rest of us, and desert Port Hatch. And Burmah's got some new quirk in his noodle, because he's been shut up in his room for two days, work-

ing over something, and walking up and down the floor, and whistling. What do you think of that? Whistling! Him!"

Pick gravely agreed with Little Billy that they and Tommy were doubtless the only sane persons in what was left of the town. And, if there was any doubt of Burmah's lunacy, they were to be convinced before they were through talking by the appearance of that gentleman in person, walking briskly, with hat well down on the back of his head, and a mere rag of a cigar protruding from between his lips. In his hand he carried a sheet of paper.

"Hello, Boys!" he said by way of greeting. "You don't seem very busy. Well, I'll try to find somethin' for you to do pretty all-fired soon. We're goin' to hit some high spots mighty quick now."

He seated himself at the table, and laid his sheet of paper before him, and they saw that it was covered over with his minute handwriting, with many painful erasures and alterations, betokening much thought and care in its preparation.

"Now, pay attention," he said, "because I may leave for Seattle to-day, or to-morrow at the latest, and I won't have a whole lot of time to talk to you before I go. I want you two boys to go over this, and fix up the grammar and the spellin', so's I won't make a monkey of myself when I send it out. Then I want about fifteen hundred circular letters made out of it. It'll be your job to fill in the realty lot numbers there—where you'll see a blank. Fill 'em in with pen and ink. Then mail one to each man that's pulled out of Port Hatch, and left his address behind. Of course, all of 'em

have. The postmaster'll tend to that part of it. Now, here's the next important thing. I don't want the Colonel, or Arabella, under no circumstances, to get wise to this. They ain't to know that these letters are bein' sent out, because the Colonel would get right in with both feet, and tip the whole kettle of fish into the ashes. Bring me up the proofs."

He got to his feet, and hurried back to his rooms with all his former zest, as if time were of the utmost importance, and they took the paper between them and read it with gasps and exclamations. They made the few necessary corrections, and then read it over again, aloud, and questioned more than ever whether Burmah were still quite sane. It read:

Dear Sir:

You are the owner of Lot —— Plat —— as filed in the office of the Registrar of Port Hatch. You have it listed with the Port Hatch Land Company for sale at $———.

I am in receipt of information that leads me to believe there is a strong probability that we shall be able, despite its announcements to the contrary, to induce the Atlantic & Oriental Railway to make this city its terminus. I have not permission to give the sources of my information, but can assure you that I believe them trustworthy, and entitled to the fullest credence. Indeed, so firm are my own convictions on the subject, that *I frankly advise you not to sell.* If, however, you

still desire to dispose of your property at the ridiculously low price offered, Colonel Alonzo Fairfax Hatch will pay you that sum in cash on receipt of deeds transferring the property jointly to him and his daughter, Miss Arabella Hatch. This offer stands for thirty days from date, but inasmuch as the number of deals may prove so many as to tax the Colonel's resources (should there be many foolish enough to close out), you are respectfully requested to give us an immediate answer. Address or see me at the Company's offices in Seattle.

Again urgently advising you to keep your property and to *withdraw it from the market*, and renewing the assurance of my firm belief that we shall eventually get the railway, I am,

Sincerely yours,
BURMAH JONES.

Little Billy threw the sheet on the table with a jeer of contempt.

"Now, what in the deuce will anybody think who gets that?" he demanded.

"That the Colonel's gone off his trolley, and that Burmah is trying to boost the town again," grinned Pick.

"But the funny part of it to me is that it looks as if Burmah means business," insisted Little Billy. "And, say, that isn't all! Do you know that the Colonel's flat busted, and has been for two or three

months? Why, he hasn't got a cent! He's either got hold of some money, or else Burmah's putting it up for him."

Pick slapped the paper with his hand, and expressed his opinion.

"The Colonel doesn't know a thing about it, and neither does Arabella. That's why Burmah was so emphatic about it's being kept a secret. Burmah's money is doing it, and by having the deeds made jointly he's fixing it up so that the Colonel can't squander it all over again. The Colonel can't ever dispose of any of it without her consent."

He carried the copy out to the printer to be set up, and, when he returned, Little Billy had departed, heading straight for Burmah's seclusion. Burmah was in his shirt-sleeves, working over numerous calculations, when Little Billy entered and sat down.

"Burmah," he said, "you told me, once, never to ask you any questions; but I just can't help it. Are you sure that railway is coming here?"

"Billy," said Burmah, quietly, "I'm bettin' my last dollar on it. And, what's more, I advise you boys to buy all you can handle. There's nothin' sure in this world till it's done. Of course, there's a chance that I'm fooled, and that there will never be a road here while any of us are alive to hear its engines toot; but I'm bettin' there will be."

"But where on earth is the Colonel going to get the money to buy back this land?" queried Little Billy, with anxious solicitude.

Burmah suddenly became engrossed in his figures again, and then said, without looking up:

"I guess you know Arabella's gone and engaged

herself to that man, Lester, don't you? Maybe he's got money. I don't know. And, anyhow, it's none of my business. Only, neither the Colonel, nor Arabella, is to know anything about that letter. You understand that!"

He turned and scowled at Little Billy, and then continued his work.

"It strikes me you'd better go and get a hustle on yourself. Look up those lists. Don't dawdle around and waste time guessin'. Just do what you're told."

"It's his money, just the same!" doggedly muttered Little Billy, as he went back to the offices. "But, by Jingoes! any gamble that's good enough for him will do for me. And I'll tell Pick and Tommy what he said. Hang Kirby! He quit us."

All day long, and until late in the evening, Burmah Jones made hasty visits. And everywhere he went he talked to those of the faithful who had not deserted Port Hatch, and always the talk was the same; to cling to their property, to buy more if they wanted to risk the advent of a railway, which he, Burmah Jones, was convinced would come, and never to lose their grip. In a few instances, this was varied a trifle, and those cases were with the widow who lived across the street from his rooms, and still watered her flowers and tended the little shop—the elder Todd and Herr Schmidt. To each of these he offered to lend money, and urged them to accept it, for the purchase of lands. And each did accept, wondering in the meantime at the generosity of the man who had never been known to be either a spendthrift, a dreamer, or anything

but the hardest, closest kind of a financier. For Hubbard also he drew a cheque, and gave him caution and advice. He found time to write a list of names of big foreign land-holders who had bought for purposes of speculation, and to draw a cheque for Lester for one hundred thousand dollars, and these he carried with him to Marquard Villa, and delivered to Lester late that evening. He occupied his room in the villa that night, and for a long time looked out of the window before retiring, wondering, dully, whether he should ever again enter it, and was once more filled with a homesickness that almost amounted to a heartache.

"Well," he said to himself before he went to sleep, in a queer combination of comment and prayer, "if I've been a fool, and everything goes smash, I'll have the satisfaction of knowing that I done my best. A month'll tell the story. And Lord, if You have made a sucker of me because I deserve it, and are goin' to put me in the scrap-heap, be easy on the Colonel and Arabella, and the rest of 'em, because they ain't done nothin'. Just take it all out on me. Amen!"

And neither the Colonel nor Arabella suspected, when he bade them good-by on the following morning, that he had no intention of returning to Port Hatch until the fight was decided, for better or for worse; but there was a tired, worn look in his thoughtful eyes that impelled Arabella to come swiftly, put her arms around his neck, and kiss him as he turned away, and she did not know that as he trudged down the street he walked blindly, because his eyes were filled with unaccustomed tears.

CHAPTER XXV.

BUT FATE INTERVENES.

The thirty days mentioned by Burmah in his circular passed, and seemingly everything in Port Hatch was unchanged and waiting. On that very day of final grace, Little Billy, summoned by the Kansan to Seattle, returned on the boat, carrying with him a suit-case filled with deeds that were to be put on record now that Burmah's desire to keep the Colonel in ignorance was removed. The newspapers had ignored his circular letter, having concluded that this was nothing more than a scheme to advertise Port Hatch, which no one but a lunatic could hope to resuscitate. And the latter conclusion had been the one, also, of some thousand others who had invested in that ill-fated town when it was on the boom, and they had jumped at the offer of Burmah Jones, and gleefully accepted what they got, and charged the monies lost to the profit-and-loss accounts on their books. Still others had written him personally before selling, and had been induced, by his replies, to hold on a while longer. He was playing his game honestly, from start to finish, and had not time to waste over his own change of heart. He accepted that as he had everything else in life, considering all yesterdays dead, and all past actions irrevocable. His resolution to be honest was frequently tested as by fire, and his patience suffered now and then; but he kept

grimly in the path that he had laid for his future steps, and did not swerve. He sat, now, with a feeling of utter relief; for on that day his work was done, for better or for worse.

The door opened, and in came Lester, whom he had not seen in all the interim, smiling, well groomed, and less tanned than on that evening when Burmah had bidden him good-by after handing him the lists and cheques.

"Well," said Burmah, after greeting him in his restrained way, "I understand from your letters that you made good."

"Yes," replied Lester, "I did. I've got the deeds for all of it in my grip. I bought all that I was told to buy, and was short but eleven hundred dollars. I paid that out of my own pocket."

Burmah wheeled in his chair, and took out his cheque-books. He figured for a minute, his pen scratched across the blanks, and he turned and handed Lester five slips of paper.

"Sorry to have to cut it up that way," Burmah said, apologetically; "but the fact is that I, too, have made good. Those cheques clean me out. I've got just two hundred dollars left in the banks, and seventeen in my pocket."

A shade of pity crept into Lester's eyes, and he held the cheques out again toward the Kansan.

"Better keep them," he said. "I can stand a part of it, I think. You'll need more money than you've got."

"No," answered Burmah, resolutely; "I never start to do a thing, and change, unless I have to. My part of the big play of Port Hatch is over

with, no matter how she goes. I see that Board of Directors arrived here again this morning. The newspapers are gloatin' over it."

"Yes," answered Lester.

"And you're goin' to see 'em?"

"Yes. I shall see them at once, and do what I can to influence them."

"And do you think you've got your pull to work so they'll reconsider?"

Lester smiled enigmatically, appeared on the verge of saying something regarding what he hoped to do, and then said:

"Yes, perhaps. Never can tell."

Burmah sat quietly in his chair, stocky and imperturbable, apparently unruffled by the fact that this day was to decide whether all his efforts in the Colonel's behalf, and his own ruin, had been mere folly. He seemed to have nothing more to say, and Lester, watching him, felt the same admiration that had come to him on that night in the Club. He fought a desire to try to break down the man's barrier of reserve, to make him express some of the thoughts that must be running rampant behind the steady, unwavering eyes; to stir him from that stolid pose, unbending as fate.

"You'll hear from me to-morrow," he said, at last, after the silence had become so prolonged as to be embarrassing, and arose to make his departure.

"All right," Burmah answered, without the movement of a muscle and without looking up. "Wish you luck!"

That was all. No emotion, no tremor of voice, no twitching of the hands, head, or body. The door

closed as Lester went out, and then, quite abruptly, the fat hands went into the air, and shook themselves, the bulky body writhed, and Burmah said between shut teeth:

"Win, Boy—win! You've got to win! You've got to!"

In the same suite of rooms from which the Colonel had departed so tempestuously, months before, on the day of doom, sat the same Board of Directors, who guided the destinies of the great Transcontinental railway; but there was a singular and noticeable change in its members' demeanor. They talked nervously, and argued, and were emphatic, angry, or sullen, as their individualities ran. They were in the midst of it, when the door-man entered, and announced:

"Mister Lester Ford, Gentlemen." . . . A strange hush succeeded their subdued clamor.

Into the room, firmly, with stiffly set head and cold, determined eyes, came the man known to those of Port Hatch as Lester.

"Gentlemen!" he said, bowing gravely from right to left. As if by one impulse, they stood to their feet, and the redoubtable Thornton himself, grown almost obsequious, tendered a chair by his side at the head of the table.

"I was extremely sorry," Ford said, without wasting words on greeting, "to cause you the inconvenience of coming here to Seattle to hold this Board meeting; but I deemed it best to do so for certain reasons of my own."

They bowed and waited for him as if paying the respect due a king.

"All of you know my distaste for directly interfering with any of my business affairs," he went on, "and that, unlike my father, I have no special desire to pile millions on top of millions. Nor have I that desire now. Let me see! Some months ago, you decided to make Seattle the terminus of the road that I, with the assistance of one or two others, have been financing; the road that I have caused to be continued because it was my father's pet hobby and his life hope."

"That is true, Mister Ford," said Thornton.

"What did you think of Port Hatch?" abruptly demanded Lester Ford, eying him.

"Well, we went up there and looked it over," replied Thornton, with unusual suavity.

"So did I," asserted Lester, with equal calmness. "I've lived there since it started."

"Strange we never heard of you being there," mused Carleton, as if surprised.

"Not so strange," retorted the millionaire. "I went there for my health, and for my own pleasure. I told them my name was Lester, because I didn't care to be annoyed merely because I had inherited money. I stayed there because—well—that's my personal affair. When you gentlemen believed I was in Europe, I didn't happen to be there. That is all. I know all about Port Hatch. It is just what Burmah Jones declared it was, an ideal terminus!"

Carleton, Sprague and Thornton sat up angrily.

"Then you know Jones, also, do you?" demanded Carleton.

"Yes, and like, admire and believe in him," de-

clared Lester, with a pronounced and conclusive defiance in his voice.

They started to speak; but he held up his hand for silence, and they dared not protest.

"I know all about your last meeting," said Lester, significantly. "There happens to be on this Board of Directors one man who keeps me informed, privately, of everything that takes place. Not that I do not trust you. You know that. Otherwise, there would not at this moment be a majority of this Board who vote my proxies, and are thereby elected to it."

There was a moment's stillness, broken by Thornton, who said, as if stating an accepted fact:

"That is true, Mister Ford. I am one of them."

"And, by the way," said Lester, "three of you gentlemen here, at some time, were victims of this Burmah Jones, I understand. There is no need for you to apologize for either yourselves, or him. He is a very exceptional and plausible man. The most exceptional I have ever known. From what I could learn, he has been worse than unscrupulous; but I know absolutely—absolutely, Gentlemen—that Mister Jones regrets all that, and is at this moment as noble a man as ever I care to meet. I hope to win his esteem, his loyalty, his affection. There is none other like him that I have ever known. And so eager am I to serve him and his wishes, that I tell you, here, now, that I will personally reimburse any man at this table who can tell me the sum of which he was defrauded by this same Burmah Jones, and I do so in the firm belief that Burmah, when he knows of it, and if he is ever able, will reimburse me."

At this brave championship, so outspoken and sur-

prising, three members of the Board sat up and stared at one another, and then back at the millionaire who had offered his money.

"However, we'll discuss that later, in private," said Lester, resuming his customary attitude. "What I want to say now, is this: I desire the announcement made, and carried out, that the A. and O. will run direct to Port Hatch, and that Port Hatch is to be its main seabord terminal on this Coast.

From all around the table came protests and exclamations.

"Why, we can't do that," insisted Thornton, losing a little of his temper. "We stultify ourselves."

"Of course we do," declared Carleton, but with less belligerence. "We've told them that—"

"Never mind what has been told them," interrupted Lester, in the same icy tone that had made his father before him the most feared man that ever dictated financial terms to other boards, and they recognized there, at the table with them, that same imperious, fighting spirit.

"The old breed," whispered one man at the lower side of the table to his neighbor.

And the other nodded, and whispered back:

"He's got the whip-hand, and will have his way. Look out for storms!"

"But I have announced," declared the choleric Thornton, "that the road—"

"I said it didn't matter what you had announced," blazed Lester. "Any man who wants to fight me in this proposition can have the privilege of resigning from this Board, or being thrown out at the annual election, which takes place in New York on

the fifteenth of the coming month! I say, the road goes to Port Hatch!"

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" cautioned an elderly and pacific man, who thus far had not spoken. "Mister Ford is the practical owner and backer of this road. In a sense we are here to observe and defer to his wishes. I wish to offer a resolution rescinding the former vote, that which extends our line to Seattle."

"But the gain?" protested Thornton, still struggling to hold his ground. "Colonel Hatch made us an offer of certain concessions."

"We ask no concessions," sharply retorted Lester. "This road can afford to buy what it wants. And it will do so. Port Hatch alone has sufficient advantages to justify making it the terminus. Mister Chairman, I believe there is a motion before you."

With unconcealed antagonism, Thornton asked for a second, got it, put the question to a vote, and announced that it had been carried. Instantly a motion was offered to the effect that the Atlantic & Oriental Railway select Port Hatch as its terminal, and through the proper channels instruct its purchasing department to enter into negotiations to buy the requisite lands and rights of way. That, too, was carried, with Carleton and Sprague not voting.

"And may I suggest," said Lester, although his tone carried rather command, "that the Secretary be instructed to send out, immediately after the close of the meeting, an announcement to the Seattle newspapers? I think it will be sufficient for you, Gentlemen," he added, slyly, "if you embody in your an-

nouncement the statement, as a reason for the change from your former decision, that certain inducements have been offered in favor of Port Hatch that cannot be overlooked."

Thornton gave a dry, mirthless grin, and told the Secretary to attend to the announcement.

"That, also, I trust, will enable you, Gentlemen of the Board, to 'square yourselves,' as my friend, Burmah Jones, would say, with the interviewers," blithely remarked Lester as he arose. And then: "Having no further business or desire to interfere with you, I think I shall go to my hotel. If anyone wishes to talk about his personal deals with Burmah Jones, I can be found there at any time to-day; but not later, because I expect to take the morning boat for Port Hatch. Gentlemen, I am pleased to have met you all again, after so long a time."

He bowed from his hips, and moved toward the door. He had already opened it, and started out, when he remembered a further instruction. He stood in the doorway, as he spoke.

"I almost neglected to say," he said, "that I wish to preserve my incognito. I do not wish that my friends of Port Hatch, the most beautiful little city on the Pacific Coast, where I fish with fishermen, hob-nob with a Dutch band-master, argue over cocktails with a bar-tender, and have endeavored to learn to play a steam calliope under a harsh task-master, should confuse the dawdler, Lester, with the far less lovable personage of Lester Ford. Gentlemen, I wish you a most pleasant journey back to the stone cañons of the Street called Wall. Good-day!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE KNAVE CONFESSES.

With that strange inconsistency which dominates the actions of men, the wheel reversed itself, and the whole world seemed to turn toward Port Hatch, the "City Beautiful," arisen from deathly somolence, and again the land of delight for the home-seeker, and the adventurer in quest of fortune. The influential and widely read evening papers of Seattle contained the announcement that the far-reaching railway, at the last moment, had been compelled, for reasons that were known to itself alone, to decide on Port Hatch. And in that marvelous spirit of Seattle that makes of every man a sturdy winner or a philosophic unfortunate, they gracefully acknowledged the merits of the rival port, and wished it success. The North-west Coast, boundless in wealth and resources, had room for all. Rivalry, when it developed the common cause, could be, after all, nothing more than friendly. The morning papers congratulated Port Hatch in issues that were carried on boats that suddenly resumed their old schedules, and that, unexpectedly, were loaded with the old-time crowds, seeking the new city of promise. Those who had clung to their investments in this strange city congratulated themselves on their foresight, and those who had sold stampeded to return and renew their allegiance. The syndicate that had been deterred from buying, through the frankness of Burmah after he had adopted his new and unyielding course of honesty, came clamoring back to the offices of the Port Hatch Land Company, and there met its

old rivals, the Conover group, who looked glum and distressed because they had parted with a golden opportunity. Others were there waiting, who volubly cursed Burmah Jones, accused him of having tricked them into selling their holdings at a loss, and now and then spared a word of condemnation for the Colonel. All of which caused Billings, busy, to remark that it "was music to the gamblers' ears to hear the loser squeal."

But, through all this reversal, Burmah Jones could not be seen. Anxious, and wondering at his disappearance, Little Billy and Tommy came to Seattle, and sought him on the third day after it became public that Port Hatch was indubitably destined to be a great city. Like the indefatigable hound-dogs of their native State, they nosed this way and that, seeking him. At his hotel they knew nothing, save that, on the morning of the big announcement, he had paid his bill, carefully counted the change, and delivered his baggage to a taxi-cab. After hours of patient work, they ferreted out the taxi-cab, and were informed by its chauffeur that he had taken Burmah to an obscure lodging-house down by Smith's Dock. Thither they drove, and battered on the door of a dingy, decrepit, weather-beaten structure, plainly a relic of the earlier boom days, when Seattle had been merely transient. A frowsy-headed girl, who chewed gum, and fought with a wisp of unkempt hair, admitted them, and pointed up the stairs.

"Top floor, back, I think, is the gent you want," she said, and they climbed the creaking, dirty steps, and rapped on the door at the end of a dark hall.

"Come in," bade a weary voice, and they opened it, and entered.

Seated, as if utterly tired of effort, and clothed in his gorgeous bath-robe, was Burmah, his feet encased in carpet-slippers, with a pile of papers scattered on the floor beside him. Everywhere about him was confusion, and litter. The fragments of torn letters were over the ragged carpet, cigar-butts were on the ledge beneath the clouded window-panes, and the remnants of sandwiches were carelessly bestowed on the top of the wabbly dresser, amidst silver and gold toilet articles. A cup and saucer, of that thickness affected by boarding-houses where such implements are sometimes used as weapons, were on top of his bed, indicating, as did everything else, that for at least two days he had not been out for his meals.

"Hello, Boys!" he greeted them, as if but an hour or so had elapsed since last they parted, and this were his usual environment. He did not even rise from his chair, or extend his hand; and they saw that deep, sharp lines had twisted themselves across his face, and hollows were under the eyes that had fearlessly met all comers and all vicissitudes. Yet, still, there was the old brave pose of the head, the old reckless tilt of the firm chin, the old steady poise of the stocky, powerful body. Nevertheless, in him was the suggestion of the victor vanquished.

"For God's sake! Burmah! What are you doing here?" demanded Little Billy, struggling against a boyish desire to throw his arm over the shoulders of the man he loved, and wished to embrace, boy-fashion.

Burmah smiled tolerantly and with a soft display of sadness in his eyes.

"Cleanin' up the old; gettin' ready for the new," he asserted, without complaint. "I've always done that—when I'm busted. It don't pay to look back, except to pick out the mistakes, so's they won't be done over again."

As if quite intent on his course, he glanced at a letter in his hand, scowled ever so slightly, re-read the first few lines, then tore it into scraps, which he threw to join the other waste on the floor.

"Well, how's Port Hatch?" he asked, as if merely making conversation, and reaching for another letter in the open suit-case beside his chair. As far as his words or voice were concerned, he might have been asking for the welfare of some place that he had never seen. "Everybody well?"

"Burmah! Burmah! You don't intend to abandon it like this, do you?" demanded Tommy, coming to the side of the chair. "Why, man, they're looking for you, everywhere! The Colonel is walking through the town asking for you. Lester's there, and bombarding us for news. Old Todd meets every boat with the Widow Higgins, who prays for you! Arabella's been crying because she thinks something must have happened to you, and all of them—Hubbard—Zo-Zo—Herr Schmidt—everyone is wondering what has become of you. They sent us down here to try and find you."

For an instant, Burmah stared blankly at the letter he held in his hand, and a twinge, as of mental pain, whipped across his face; but he made no reply.

"You've got to get out of here, and go back with

us," growled Little Billy. "The Colonel's reception is to-night. It would kill him if you weren't there. You can do as you bloomin' well please; but you still owe something to the rest of us—some sign that you cared more for us than just the love of the game."

For a little while Burmah sat, with fixed brows, looking at his feet, as if considering this phase, and then, very quietly, he stood up, and said:

"They think that, do they?—that all I cared for was the fight itself? Well, it wasn't. I cared for them. I'll go—go back there to the Colonel's reception. I can spare time for that, I guess. But it's all foolishness. It's wasting time, and I haven't a lot left. I feel old. I've made it a rule to always drop, and never return to, the finished task. A deal finished is a deal done. But, if they think I'm not there, and am leaving, just because the game's done, I'll go back, for to-night; but for to-night only."

He threw off the bath-robe, and reached for his collar and tie; and Tommy, eager to help him, began gathering the things from the dresser, and thrusting them into the big leather bag that lay open on the floor. Little Billy held Burmah's coat for him, and sensed a weakness in the arms that were obediently thrust into the waiting sleeves. They hustled him out, and he went with them as if still undecided, and dazed by their energy. Little Billy stopped behind, at the hall-way door, to pay the bill to the slatternly maid, and they tumbled into the waiting taxi-cab, and directed the driver to the wharf.

"Don't wait to buy tickets," shouted Little Billy,

as they reached the end of the dock, and heard the boat's warning whistle; "we'll pay the purser." And Burmah ran up the gang-plank with a little of the old-time haste that had been his when something requiring speed was to be done. The boat was crowded, and there were many who came to greet him; but he did not display his wonted fire and vivacity. He seemed rather like one who assumes a polite interest, and wishes to be alone. Only when they came in sight of Port Hatch did his eyes glow, and his hands clasp themselves, and his attitude betray his yearning. He seemed quite the old Burmah when he walked down the gang-plank. He laughed and joked with those who met him. He shook hands with the Todd brothers as if they were relatives, and waved a gay salute at Hubbard as the latter came pushing his way between men to greet him.

"I'll go up to my old diggin's," he said to Little Billy, "and get on the new clothes that always make me so devilish uncomfortable."

"No," protested Little Billy; "no use in doing that. They aren't there. Arabella came to your rooms two or three weeks ago, and packed all your stuff that you had left, and had the trunks moved up to the hill. Everything is up there."

Burmah frowned as though vexed, and then led the way determinedly to a cab.

"Well, I guess there's nothin' else to do, then," he said, "but to go on up."

He looked interestedly at the changes that but a few days had made. As the cab climbed the road cut into the face of the cliff, it passed many pedes-

trians who greeted him respectfully, and, when it turned into Main Street, Burmah observed that already this had resumed some of its old appearance, and that numerous persons were bustling along its smooth pavement. The widow was putting in a fresh display of hats, and he smiled with inward satisfaction as he noted that her face looked less careworn. Several carpenters were carrying supplies from the shop of the elder Todd, and Burmah leaned far over and peered into the open door to see that the place was filled and business brisk. Along their route he saw houses that were being reopened, and gardeners mowing lawns and re-setting flowers. Port Hatch was alive again, and making impatient strides to overcome that lapse wherein she had marked time.

"Bless my soul! Why, bless my soul!" the Colonel shouted, as he rushed through the door, and fairly embraced Burmah. "Lord, Burmah! What on earth ails you that you didn't come back sooner? What's wrong?" he demanded, with all of his former exuberance.

But Arabella brought him to the breaking point by tripping down the steps, and throwing herself into his arms. She chided him for his long absence; but he could not speak, for his heart-strings were being wrenched as by a mistaken hand. Lester was there, smiling a welcome, and his hand went out and caught Burmah's in a grip that hurt. He looked almost blankly up at Lester, and then turned away, glad to seek the room that had been his since Marquard Villa had supported a roof. The Colonel followed after him, as if fearful that he might again lose

him, and Little Billy and Tommy refused Uncle Jeff's assistance to carry his meager baggage.

"Well, Burmah, I've been pinin' for you," the Colonel declared, when they were alone. "There's a heap of business I've got to talk to you about. One thing, Sir, that sort of puzzles me, is where all the money came from to buy back the lots."

"Oh, you know you had quite a balance left with the Company that hadn't been turned over," said Burmah, shaving himself in the light of the sunset, but without looking around.

"But I don't exactly see how it all happened," insisted the Colonel. "The buying in of all that stuff again!"

"Why, Colonel, you see it was this way," said Burmah, still addressing himself in the mirror. "You weren't there to talk it over with me, and I didn't have time to come up here, when the pesky boats stopped runnin', so I did just what I thought you'd want me to do under the circumstances. You see, you've suggested so many things to me that—"

"By George!" declared the Colonel. "I don't recollect ever tellin' you to buy the property back; but I reckon I must have. There was never such an assistant as you are, Burmah. You just naturally take the words and the ideas right out of my mouth. Most astounding how easy it is for a gentleman to make money when he starts out to do it! And that plagued railroad! It had to come here, after all. And now it has to pay me for the land that I offered it for nothing! I brought those hifalutin little financiers from New York to terms, before I got done, didn't I? That is, I didn't, but Port

Hatch did! They had to come. They couldn't get away from her, Sir. She's the greatest city in the world. She's a credit to the Hatch family, Sir; and long after you and I are dead, folks will remember us, and say we were the men that made her. Maybe they'll give us a monument, Burmah. Be fine, wouldn't it? A bronze statue with you and me on horses, with our swords held up, or something like that!"

"I never used a sword a whole lot," objected Burmah.

"I wonder," said the Colonel, thoughtfully, "if they'd think it immodest if I were to have that statue made? It'd look mighty fine out in front of the opera-house."

"Sure they would," Burmah declared, hastily. "Couldn't be nothin' worse than to buy one for ourselves."

The Colonel changed color a little as he stood a moment in thought, and appeared downcast.

"Do you know, Burmah," he said, a little sadly, "I fear that in endeavoring to do honor to Miss Arabella, for which I admire your courtesy, Sir —quite like you to want to be gallant to a daughter of mine and such a charming girl—you made a mistake? I find her the most stubborn girl I ever knew when it comes to signing deeds and such. Why, do you know, Burmah, she's kept me from making any sales at all since things changed? She won't sign anything! I'll declare she's getting so she reminds me more and more of her sainted mother. I loved that woman, Sir, and honored her; but, sometimes, she was so stingy that I used to

walk out back of the house, and kick a dog, just to relieve my feelings. I did! 'Pon my word I did!"

The Colonel retired at last, after telling Burmah to come down to dinner within ten minutes, and all through the dinner-hour, with the big table widely spread and the little family around him, he rambled gaily on, exuberant over everything, and forgetful of the dire days when Port Hatch seemed dying. So long did he delay them with his whimsies that the guests were beginning to arrive, and the lights glowed over the lawns of Marquard Villa, before they arose. Burmah, loathing his waiting dress-suit, slipped out into the spacious grounds, and wandered around alone, peering now and then through the foliage as the guests appeared. There they came, the ones that had stood loyally by the "City Beautiful," and those who had assisted in her making. The band arrived, with its full force and Herr Schmidt in evening dress assuming a proprietary air, as befitted a man who had become well-to-do from astute speculation. It filed sedately through the house and out to the terrace, where it rattled its steel music-stands, tuned its instruments, and then burst forth into a march of triumph that could not be misinterpreted. Burmah realized that he must slip through to his room, and dress himself.

The band played an overture, and a soft melody of spring. The crowd increased until the palace of dreams was filled with well-dressed men and women, all happy, all gay, all laughing and talking; and yet Burmah Jones did not appear. The Colonel

went through the process of shaking hands with each arrival, bowing deeply and congratulating each on the turn of fortune. He enthused, and mellowed and expanded, until his guests, knowing his weakness, and glad to humor it, called upon him for a speech. He stood in the big, hospitable hall-way at the foot of the stairs, smiling warmly at them, a kindly, lovable old man, courteous and handsome, as true cavalier as ever was painted by Meissonier.

"Ladies and Gentlemen of Port Hatch," he said as the noise died away to respectful attention, "I thank you all for the honor that you have done me and mine, and, also, I thank heaven for the blessed privilege of again greeting some of those whom, I so sadly feared through the dark days of misfortune, I should never see again. They were dark days, in which the candle of faith was sorely tried by the chill winds of doubt and adversity. Days when the flowers lost their bloom, the moon its light, and the sun its warmth. And yet, my friends, we who are here to-night never wavered. We were dwellers in the heart of the ideal, fortunate participants in the glories of the greatest of American cities, Port Hatch. We knew that she would not fail us. Clouds might obscure her star, but always the star, serene and undimmed, shone behind them, beckoning us on, voicing through its disturbed rays the message, sometimes whispered to us in the stillness of the drear night as by the rustling of the clouds, to be steadfast. You have congratulated me here to-night, many of you, on having won a victory; and I cannot with truth deny that I have done my share as best I could; but it seems to me,

on thinking it all over, on reviewing everything, that the one man to whom most of the credit is due, is my partner, my beloved friend, the friend of us all, the redeemer of Port Hatch, William Burmah Jones!"

The shout that tore upward drowned his voice, and he waited for it to die away. It was as if he had suddenly recalled the truth to so many who stood there by him, and all of them now sought to make amends for negligence by paying tribute to the man who had done so much.

"Where is he?" demanded the Colonel of Arabella, making his voice heard above the confusion. "Burmah! Burmah Jones!"

His shout was taken up by the others, until Marquard Villa rocked with its turbulence. Up in the room at the head of the noble staircase, Burmah heard them, and opened the door, and stepped out. He halted, and looked down upon them, unmoved.

They lifted their hands and cheered. Women fluttered their handkerchiefs, and Herr Schmidt, jubilant, rushed madly through the crowd with his queer, broken, "Eggscuse me, blease," and called to the band to play, "See the Conquering Hero Comes."

Quite slowly, and with a set face, Burmah descended, and, as he came, lagging, step by step, one slow foot advancing past the other, they discovered, with surprise, that there was no gladness in the clear eyes that stared down on them. The face above them was as a death-masque, cold, immobile, unsmiling, with the lips compressed, the strong eyebrows fixed, the nostrils white like carved

marble. There was a cold majesty in his deportment, blended with some valiant intent that radiated from him like chill, purposeful rays. A woman's hand that had bravely fluttered a wisp of lace stopped as if arrested in mid-air. The shout of praise strangled, choked, died, in the throat of Little Billy, who stood at the steps with hands outstretched in the blind fidelity that he had conceived for the masterful, grotesque man above. Lester, whose affection had grown in inverse proportion to the dislike he had previously sustained, halted as he left Arabella's side, and brushed a hand across his eyes, as if seeing behind Burmah some tragic, portentous figure. The Colonel alone smiled affectionately and beckoned.

Step by step, resolute and slow, Burmah descended until he reached the middle of the broad stairs, where he halted, and raised his hand, seeming, from where he stood, to tower above them, alone. Herr Schmidt, who had rushed back, suddenly waved toward the window, and the band ceased its salute.

The man above waited until the last note had died away, still poised on the carpeted marble stairs, still holding out a fat hand for attention. Tragedy was in his appearance; tragedy dominated in the air. Merriment had folded her wings, and slipped outside where the night birds chirped their disturbed notes, and the sound of the waves climbed faintly upward across the terrace and gardens of Marquard Villa, the palace of dreams. Burmah's firm lips opened twice before sound issued from them, and then there was inflexible command and profound melancholy in his voice, which somehow had become

musical and far reaching, as the tone of a well-cast bell.

"You are my friends," he said, and there was something of pride and love, unexpressed, but there, pregnant, in his words: "and you've called for me, to tell me of it, and to say things that I can't accept. I'm done with pretense. All my life I've lived a lie! I lied to you when you first came. I lied to you afterward—to all of you—save Lester. He knows! I used you. I played with you as tools for my unworthy hands. I was a hypocrite. I never knew that the road was coming. I didn't believe that it could. I wasn't fit to clean the streets over which your trusting feet walked. I was everything that was base, and mean, and mercenary. That you've made money, and that Port Hatch has made good, is no work of mine. It is Lester's and the Colonel's—God protect him!—and yours! You'll hate me after this; but I'll be true to myself, and I'll go away, to begin over again, and maybe, sometime when I've proved that I'm fit, I'll come back, and beg you, honest ones that you are, to call me a friend. I can't now. I want no thanks from you! I want truth! I want—"

His voice broke suddenly, and his arms were flung forward as if in appeal for some little portion of their respect, yearningly, desperately imploring. His lips moved without sound, and he struggled to speak his unspoken words. Then, as if the world were slipping from beneath him, he reeled and pitched forward, head foremost, and fell crumpled at their feet. The big palm at one side of the broad steps overturned. There were the

screams of women and exclamations of men as they rushed forward to pick him up.

In an awed hush, they carried him back up the stairs, down which, as a dominant, forceful man, he had so lately descended. Into the room they took him, where all his pitiful belongings, everything he had in the world, were scattered as he had left them. They cleared from his bed the gaudy, tasteless, worn suit of clothes that he had thrown there in the haste of dressing and laid him, stark and motionless, on the counterpane. A doctor thrust out of the room the distressed ones who had followed, tore open the crumpled dress-shirt, and bent his head above the struggling breast.

"Colonel," he said turning around with the grave professional look that so seldom lies, "please dismiss your guests. And will you, Pickett, get a nurse at once, although she may not be needed? She may be too late. Mister Todd, would you mind getting someone to run to my home, instantly, and bring my emergency case?"

He stopped for a moment, and in the silence they all leaned toward him with an unspoken question.

When he spoke, his voice was like a knell, soft, and calm, even as the sighing of the wind after a long tempest.

"I am afraid!" he said. "I'm afraid that our friend is leaving us—leaving us on a longer journey than he has ever taken in his stormy life."

And Burmah Jones, all the harsh lines gone from his face, lay before them, quiet and still, as if there were nothing left for which to strive, and no Port Hatch to mourn.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TO DWELL WITH HONOR.

For days he had lain in coma, and for days thereafter he had slept, not the peaceful sleep of the just; but the sleep of the warrior who fights over red and hard-trampled fields, giving and taking blows. Then had come that long period wherein he convalesced, slowly, and the physician watched and wondered at the splendid vitality of that prairie-bred constitution which could conquer an apoplectic attack, and in those slow days he lay silent, staring at the ceiling with eyes that appeared to question some shadow out beyond, some sphinx, as to the meaning of it all. The voices that came to him were no longer restrained to faint, awe-stricken whispers, but lent themselves to jest and encouragement. Sometimes he smiled; and the habitual cynicism had been erased from his firm lips, and the smile was frank and free. Sometimes he spoke, with his customary brevity, but without the snapping sting of contempt. And wonder and interest grew in the calm gray depths of his tired eyes, until a day, some three months after the Colonel's reception, when Lester, Little Billy and Arabella were in the room. They had been talking quietly, out on the tiny balcony, when the nurse, patient and faithful, called.

"Mister Jones wants to speak to you, Sir," she said to Little Billy; and immediately all those on the balcony hastened to Burmah's side.

"I think," he said, "that I'd like to have you move me, if you can, and carry me out where I

can see it all. I'm—I'm hungry to look out once more."

The nurse shook a doubtful head, but he did not see her, and went on.

"Been sick a long time, ain't I?"

"Three months," replied Little Billy.

"Then I'd like to see it," Burmah appealed.

They carried him out so that from his pillow he could look down over the sound, the beach at the water's edge, and a portion of Port Hatch that lay spread out as if for his special regard. Great ships were down by the docks, some of them sailing vessels whose spars were tinged yellow in the late afternoon sun, others black and smoky tramps of the sea, squatting like tired runners after a long race. Never in the times that he had looked at the water-front had it presented such a view of life. Farther up on the shore, men, mere specks in the distance, worked on a scaffolding as they erected a tall red smoke-stack. In the very corner of the view, as he turned his head, a skeleton steel structure was being built, and the faint tattoo of riveting machines seemed to find echoes from the big breastwork of hills behind.

"What's that stack for?" he questioned, with more of a tone of interest in his voice than they had heard in months.

"That's the stack for the new railway shops," gloated Little Billy. "They say we owe that to young Ford. Wish I could meet him and shake his fist."

Arabella glanced at Lester with a rare admiration, and Lester merely smiled.

"And that steel skeleton?" asked Burmah, weakly lifting himself a little higher on his pillow, despite the protests of the nurse.

"The new railway station," answered Little Billy. "Great stuff, isn't it? By Jove, Burmah! To think of it, that you've never seen all this, and don't know about it!"

Burmah said nothing for a long time, and then looked curiously at Arabella, who had dropped to her knees beside the head of his bed, and from her his eyes wandered to Lester.

"I suppose," he said, smiling faintly, "that I ain't been polite! I never was. But I've tried. I guess I should congratulate you, Mister Lester, on your marriage by this time."

"We aren't married yet," said Lester, his eyes softly resting on Arabella's head. "I wanted it deferred, Burmah Jones, until I could make the only amends of which I am capable, by having the most honorable man I know as my best man."

Burmah's eyes flashed a question.

"I mean you," said Lester, unabashed; and Burmah, weak from illness, felt his eyes grow moist, and turned away.

"I think I'd like to be carried back in, now," he said. "But just inside the window, so I can look out, and watch the sunset."

They obeyed his request, and Arabella's hand, slender and loving, rearranged his pillow.

"I've been down long enough," said Burmah in protest. "I'm lazy. That's all that ails me. I've got to get up and get busy. I've got to hit the trail again, and make good."

"Where do you plan to go? What are you going to do?" asked Lester, tolerantly, as to a sick boy.

"I'm not quite sure," replied Burmah, with a puzzled frown. "Once I told you, I think, that, if it came to a show-down, I could go back to New York, the biggest of the jay towns, and make a livin' peddlin' gold bricks to preachers and millionaires; but I can't do that now. I've got to try to make money on the level."

To his surprise, Lester stood erect and laughed, a strange, exultant laugh.

"Burmah," he said, "I don't know that we ought to talk to you so much, but I may as well tell you—may as well confess. You told the people here that you had lied to them. Well, I'm not much better than that, for I lied to you!"

Burmah turned his head, and frowned at him. Lester came closer and leaned over the bed, and looked at Burmah with eyes that glowed with admiration and friendship.

"You thought, and perhaps still think, that I didn't, or don't care for you, old chap. Well, I do! More than you know! You're the biggest man I ever met!"

"Humph!" said Burmah, coloring, and turning away.

"When you gave me that hundred thousand and asked me to buy back the land in the Colonel's and Arabella's name, I didn't do it!"

Burmah lifted his head from the pillow, and the old sharp, angry gleam came to his eyes that had been there in past days when any of his subordinates failed to do his will.

But Lester, undaunted, continued.

"It was too much. It was too big a thing for you to do. So I spent the hundred thousand in your name, and the deeds are filed and recorded, and you're not broke! You don't have to go anywhere, or do anything, unless you want to! Why, Man, you are rich!"

They did not know until then that Burmah had worried over a precarious future; but they saw his eyes fill with tears as his hand went weakly out and clutched the firm, comforting one that Lester extended. His other hand had crept slowly over until his wan fingers caressed Arabella's cheek, as if to express the great love he felt for her.

In the stillness of the moment, they heard voices and confusion below, and Little Billy, trying to escape, opened the door leading into the hall. Burmah's eyes followed him, and he betrayed the interest of his stronger hold on life by asking:

"What's the row?"

Little Billy listened a moment, and then turned back with a grin.

"It's the Zoölogical Committee, come to thank the Colonel for the unexpected gift of another moth-eaten tiger," he said, chuckling. "Listen! The Colonel's going to make a speech!"

And up the stairs floated, in the Colonel's best oratorical voice, pitched as if to reach a multitude:

"Fellow Citizens, I have insisted that a gentleman, did he but turn his attention to commercial pursuits, could make a financial success. I stand before you as a modest example!"